Final Status Report
May 2006

Awareness Action Accountability

A strategy for citizens living with a disability in New Brunswick

FULL CITIZENSHIP FOR ALL!

2001–2010

The decade for positive outcomes

Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons

New Nouveau Brunswick
CANADA

FINAL STATUS REPORT

AWARENESS - ACTION - ACCOUNTABILITY

A STRATEGY FOR CITIZENS LIVING WITH A DISABILITY IN NEW BRUNSWICK

"FULL CITIZENSHIP FOR ALL"

2001 - 2010
THE DECADE FOR POSITIVE OUTCOMES

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"We believe strongly in the concept of inclusion. Every citizen of this province should have the opportunity to fully participate in all aspects of community living.

We intend to demonstrate leadership towards strategies that enable more persons with disabilities to have equitable access to public programs, facilities, services, employment opportunities and especially inclusive education.

Furthermore, we will encourage the private sector and community partners to give a higher priority to include meaningful efforts to accommodate the needs of citizens with disabilities".

- Premier Bernard Lord - Speech to the Legislative Breakfast on May 30th, 2000 during New Brunswick Disability Awareness Week.

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

We are pleased to present this Final Status Update on the responses to the recommendations from the "*Awareness-Action-Accountability*" report on disability issues originally submitted to the provincial government in January, 2001.

Since then, we have released regular status updates to allow the Departments involved to present information on what they have been able to do in response to those recommendations.

A number of initiatives have been undertaken including consultations with other community stakeholders interested in these disability issues. Many recommendations have been fully or partially implemented and others are still being considered pending availability of required resources. Outcomes achieved have been reported on a regular basis.

However, some of the provincial Departments now have new structures and mandates and some priorities have changed within the disability community. Government has also acted on other disability related initiatives outside of the specific recommendations in the 2001 *Awareness-Action-Accountability* report.

Therefore this will be the Final Status Report on the 2001 recommendations. In the coming year, we will likely be working on a new baseline action plan on disability issues to serve as a new starting point for *Awareness-Action-Accountability*.

We thank everyone involved in this work so far and look forward to continued support in the future.

Randy Dickinson
Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I INTRODUCTION 1
a) Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons 1
b) Background/History to the Action Plan Process 2

II VISION 6

III VALUES AND PRINCIPLES 7

IV A NEW APPROACH TO DISABILITY ISSUES 9
a) Old and New 9
b) Warehouse - Greenhouse - Open House 10

V MAJOR ISSUES/CHALLENGES 11
a) Full Citizenship 12
b) Disability Supports 12
c) Education/Employment 12
d) Income 13
e) Health and Wellness/Prevention 13
f) Research 14

VI RECOMMENDATIONS 15

VII ACCOUNTABILITY/OUTCOME MEASURES 66
a) Personal Outcome Measures 68
b) Outcomes for Families and Children 69

VIII NEXT STEPS IN THE PROCESS 70

IX CONCLUSION 71

X APPENDIX A - Definitions 73
APPENDIX B - Statistics on Persons with Disabilities 75
APPENDIX C - Index of Recommendations Listed by Government Department . 76

I INTRODUCTION

A) PREMIER'S COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF DISABLED PERSONS

Who are we?

The Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons is a body for consultation and study which was created to advise the provincial government on matters relating to the status of persons with disabilities. The Council reports directly to the Premier of the Province.

Responsibilities

The Act governing the Premier's Council states that the Council shall advise the Minister on matters relating to the status of persons with disabilities; shall bring before the government and the public matters of interest and concern to persons with disabilities; shall promote prevention of disabling conditions; shall promote employment opportunities of persons with disabilities; and shall promote access by persons with disabilities to all services offered to the citizens of New Brunswick.

Structure

The Council consists of a Chairperson and twelve other members appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council. Provisions in the Act guarantee representation by regions, agencies working on behalf of persons with disabilities and the public at large.

Activities

To carry out its functions, the Council will receive briefs and suggestions from individuals and groups concerning the status of persons of any age with disabilities of any type; undertake research on matters relating to persons with disabilities; recommend programs concerning the status of persons with disabilities; make referrals to and consult and collaborate with universities and individuals on matters which affect persons with disabilities; propose legislation, studies and recommendations as the Council considers necessary; appoint special committees when needed; maintain an information library on subjects related to persons with disabilities and on any services/programs likely to be of interest to persons with disabilities; and offer advice and/or intervention in cases where persons with disabilities are having difficulties in gaining access to needed services.

B) BACKGROUND/HISTORY TO THE ACTION PLAN PROCESS

Canada has been recognized by the United Nations as the best country in the world in which to live. Our citizens often take for granted a legal system which provides and protects their rights to freedom and equality before the law. Our economic and social systems certainly have flaws, but we are fortunate to enjoy an overall standard of living which would be the envy of most other countries.

However, not all of the citizens have had the same access to equality of benefit to reach their potential and to enjoy a fair share of the economic and social benefits of citizenship. Persons with disabilities have often not yet achieved full citizenship when we look at such measurements as education levels completed, rates of employment, income and access to supports required directly due to their disability whatever the type and level of disability involved.

New Brunswick has shown some leadership in the past in this struggle of inclusion for persons with disabilities by opening up the public school system and trying to promote more emphasis on community based support programs and less reliance on institutional services.

In 1981, the United Nations declared the International Day of Disabled Persons which provided a focus point for the review of disability issues. Some important efforts took place in New Brunswick to address cross disability concerns.

1981 : Major provincial conference held in Fredericton to involve disability stakeholders from all sectors.

1982 : Provincial legislation passed to create the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons.

1985 : Another major provincial conference on disability issues held leading to the release of the first provincial ***Action Plan for the Decade of Disabled Persons***.

1987 : Release of the provincial ***Action Plan of 1987***.

1989 : A provincial Action Plan Forum was held to review progress on disability issues.

1990 : Release of the provincial report ***The 1990s : A Decade for Development - Revised Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick***.

1993 : ***Summary Report - Partners for Independence Forum***.

1993 : The Premier of New Brunswick announced a ***Declaration on a Decade of Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick (1993 - 2003)***.

1994 : Executive Council Office released a ***Status Report on Responses to the 1990 Revised Action Plan***.

1995 : A new provincial action plan was released entitled ***Objective Year 2003 - A Foundation for Persons with Disabilities Living in New Brunswick***.

1996 : ***Summary Report - Responses to the Recommendations Contained in Objective Year 2003 - A Foundation for Persons with Disabilities Living in New Brunswick***.

1997 : ***Secondary Summary Report - Responses to the Recommendations Contained in Objective Year 2003 - A Foundation for Persons with Disabilities Living in New Brunswick***.

1998 : ***Full Citizenship for All*** - An Action Plan.

1999 : ***Summary Status Report - Responses to the Recommendations Contained in the Action Plan "Full Citizenship For All"***.

2000 : ***Awareness and Action*** - A major provincial conference on disability issues held in Fredericton, May 28-30, 2000.

2001 : ***Responses to the Recommendations contained in the Action Plan "Awareness-Action-Accountability"***. May, 2001

2002 : ***Government response to "Awareness-Action-Accountability Plan" – Status Report***. May, 2002.

2003 : ***Status Report #3 – "Awareness-Action-Accountability" Plan***. November, 2003.

2004 : ***Update Status Report #4 – "Awareness-Action-Accountability" Plan***. December, 2004.

2006 : ***Final Status Report – "Awareness-Action-Accountability" Plan***. May, 2006.

During this same period there have been many discussions and reports at the national level that have impacted on disability issues in Canada.

The ***Obstacles Report*** from Parliament in 1981, the introduction of the ***Canadian Charter of Rights*** in 1985, the ***Federal Task Force on Disability Issues*** led by the Hon. Andy Scott which reported in 1996 and the ***In Unison*** **- Federal, Provincial and Territorial Report on A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues** released in 1998 are but some of these major events.

The development and implementation of coordinated economic and social policy is a complex and dynamic process that includes many players. Governments at all levels cannot presume to control every element necessary to achieve desirable outcomes but must show leadership where they can. All parts of the government must move in unison to achieve the ultimate goals of an inclusive society through a coordinated and complimentary approach to decisions and allocation of resources which will affect citizens with disabilities.
We believe that government has a responsibility to protect the rights of all citizens and to ensure fair access to opportunities to participate fully in the social and economic life of their communities.

Governments at all levels and other community stakeholders must recognize their obligations to full citizenship for all and include citizens with disabilities in all aspects of planning and service delivery cutting across all government departments and agencies.

This report will focus on issues and recommendations for action that can be addressed by our provincial government. **This report should not be considered a complete or final list of all issues relating to persons with disabilities. We also expect to see committed partnerships with other levels of government, the involvement of the private sector and greater support for inclusion from the community at large**.

We would like to acknowledge the input over the years from a large number of individuals and groups who have shared their vision and ideas for creating positive opportunities for persons with disabilities in New Brunswick. We have benefited from the collective wisdom of many community and government stakeholders in many exchanges and consultations.

We would like to give special acknowledgement to the Alberta Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities. They have shared many ideas from their work on developing a new provincial strategy on disability issues.

The disability community is not a single entity. There are many types and levels of disabilities which have led to different personal experiences in dealing with the system. The Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons has tried to filter out the messages and possible actions that we believe reflect wide support from the stakeholders we have been in contact with. We have included ideas and suggestions that seemed to make sense and we believe to be reasonable and fair. **Unless otherwise specified, the recommendations are intended to apply to all types of disabilities**.

We also noted that government cannot be expected to be all things to all people. They will not be able to create full citizenship and inclusive communities on their own. But they must set an example for others to follow.

Sustained and effective leadership on disability issues from the provincial government will go a long ways to achieve full participation and full citizenship for persons with disabilities in New Brunswick. **The time for action is now!**

II VISION

In order to set the vision of this paper, we have looked at the Federal, Provincial, Territorial Report released in 1998. It defined a vision for citizens with disabilities as follows -

"Persons with disabilities participate as full citizens in all aspects of Canadian society. The full participation of persons with disabilities requires the commitment of all segments of society. The realization of the vision will allow persons with disabilities to maximize their independence and enhance their well-being through access to required supports and the elimination of barriers that prevent their full participation."

- ***In Unison : A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues***

Using that message as a guide, we have developed the following text to serve as our **Vision** here in New Brunswick -

The Government of New Brunswick, in conjunction with community stakeholders, must adopt and implement inclusive policies as an on-going objective in all aspects of their activities to enable all citizens with disabilities regardless of the nature of their disability to reach their potential and to fully participate in the social and economic life of their province.

III VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

The following values and principles will guide all aspects of the development, implementation and evaluation of the Strategy for Persons Living with Disabilities in New Brunswick. They are consistent with the content of *In Unison* report, the guiding principles of the *Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons* and the values and principles offered by the disability community in New Brunswick.

Equality and Full Citizenship

Equality is a right guaranteed to all Canadian citizens. Citizenship refers to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of Canadian society. Citizenship implies participation in and contribution to the systems and the "core" services in which all Canadians can participate and to which most Canadians have access. Persons with disabilities must be recognized for their abilities, their personal contribution and their inherent worth. *In Unison* commits to collaborative action to make as inclusive as possible all domains of Canadian society.

Inclusion - Equity of Opportunity

New Brunswickers with disabilities need support to reach a level playing field where they can demonstrate their full potential as contributing citizens. Physical and attitudinal barriers must also be reduced. Support is simply a means to enhance abilities and potentials. *In Unison* commits our senior governments to collaborative action to ensure that supports are available, portable and affordable; personal supports, education and employment supports, and income supports.

Empowerment and Self-determination

Persons with disabilities require the means to maximize their independence and enhance their well-being. Individuals must have control over their lives; support mechanisms must recognize and encourage each individual's freedom of choice. Support systems must allow each individual to select from among a range of options for living and working in the community. Self-reliance and independent living is an implied goal.

Individuals and their families must be full partners in developing the policies that affect them. Consultation with consumers must occur as a matter of course. "Nothing about us without us!"

Rights and Responsibilities

Persons with disabilities have the same rights and the same responsibilities as other Canadians. This freedom also includes the implications and consequences of risk-taking; a disability does not relieve someone of responsibility for their life and their actions.

Assured Support for Basic Needs

It is easy to forget that persons with disabilities often face greater challenges and have more difficulty addressing basic survival needs. Special support may be necessary to meet essential safety and security needs. Income support may be required to ensure a life of well-being, comfort and dignity.

IV A NEW APPROACH TO DISABILITY ISSUES

A) OLD AND NEW

A NEW APPROACH TO DISABILITY ISSUES

OLD...		NEW...
Recipients	→	Participants
Passive Income Support	→	Active measures to promote employment in addition to providing necessary income support
Dependence	→	Independence
Government Responsibility	→	Shared Responsibility
Labelled as "unemployable"	→	Identification of work skills
Disincentives to leave income support	→	Incentives to seek employment and volunteer opportunities
Insufficient employment supports	→	Opportunities to develop skills and experience
Program-centered approach	→	Person-centered approach
Insufficient portability of benefits and services	→	Portable benefits and services
Multiple access requirements	→	Integrated access requirements

In Unison - 1998

B) WAREHOUSE - GREENHOUSE - OPEN HOUSE

WAREHOUSE ⟶	GREENHOUSE ⟶	OPEN HOUSE
Caring for	Enabling	Accommodating
Protection	Support	Autonomy/Empowerment
Labelled Permanently Incapacitated	Adaptation of Individual	Adaptation of Social and Physical Environment
Deemed Incompetent	Recognition of Capacity	Rights/Responsibilities

In Unison - 1998

V MAJOR ISSUES/CHALLENGES

We have chosen to group our disability issues around the following six major building blocks for social and economic policy making :

1. **Full Citizenship**
   - a) Inclusive Communities
   - b) Consumer Involvement and Participation in Community
   - c) Awareness and Attitudes
   - d) Leadership/Effective Partnerships

2. **Disability Supports**
   - a) Barrier-Free Access
   - b) Personal Supports
   - c) Communications
   - d) Accessible and Affordable Housing
   - e) Transportation
   - f) Supports to Families/Caregivers

3. **Education/Employment**
   - a) Education and Training
   - b) Employment Outcomes
   - c) Job Retention/Advancement

4. **Income**
   - a) Poverty
   - b) Detaching Eligibility for Disability Support From Income Programs
   - c) Transition Policies

5. **Health and Wellness/Prevention**
   - a) Rehabilitation Services
   - b) Access to Specialized Health Care Services
   - c) Active Living/Recreation
   - d) Prevention Strategy

6. **Research**
   - a) Demographics/Outcome Measures
   - b) Social Policy - Best Practices
   - c) Evidence Based Decision Making

1. FULL CITIZENSHIP - GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- to make New Brunswick's communities and society inclusive.
- to involve persons with disabilities in all aspects of program planning and delivery of services that affect them.
- to educate the public at large about the vision, values and principles of full citizenship for all with a focus on accepting persons with disabilities as individuals with equal rights and responsibilities as full citizens.
- to mobilize all sectors of our communities to enhance the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities.

2. DISABILITY SUPPORTS - GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- to respond to the need for stronger supports for persons with disabilities, families and caregivers.
- to improve access to disability supports.
- to enhance the portability of these supports.
- to help offset the cost of disability supports.
- to remove eligibility barriers based on age, type, cause of disability or where the person lives in New Brunswick.
- to ensure that where an individual lives in New Brunswick does not unduly influence the likelihood that he/she can achieve his/her personal goals and aspirations.
- to provide safeguards for policy developers and service providers to protect the best interests of persons with disabilities.
- to promote and facilitate participation in the economic and social life of New Brunswick, including access to supports to facilitate opportunities for people to live in their own homes.

3. EDUCATION/EMPLOYMENT - GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- to preserve and enhance inclusive public and post-secondary education.
- to increase the number of persons with disabilities who go on to complete some form of post-secondary education/training.
- to increase the number of persons with any type of disability who have regular meaningful paid employment to a rate similar to that enjoyed by persons without disabilities.
- to increase the awareness of private employers about the positive potential of persons with disabilities to fill their employment needs.

- to enhance the capacity of employers to employ persons with disabilities in real long term jobs.
- to promote volunteer opportunities that can develop skills and networks that could lead to employment.
- to increase the availability of work related supports.
- to provide information on making worksites barrier-free to employees and customers.
- to increase the number of persons with disabilities who become self-employed.
- to enable more persons with disabilities to retain jobs and/or pursue promotions.
- to facilitate smooth transitions to work from different stages of education, training, and income support programs regardless of employment status.
- to tailor educational programs to meet the needs of individual students.

4. INCOME - GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- to reduce the overall level of poverty among persons/families with disability.
- to separate eligibility for disability supports from income programs.
- to adjust eligibility policies to ensure easier transition between employment and income assistance status.
- to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to adequate and appropriate financial aid when required including the option of partial benefits.
- to ensure that persons with disabilities have enough income to meet their basic living requirements in the community.

5. HEALTH AND WELLNESS/PREVENTION - GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- to ensure the availability and timely access to specialized health care services.
- to ensure timely access to appropriate rehabilitation services that could help minimize the impact of disability.
- to ensure health and rehabilitation services to emerging disabilities such as brain injury survivors, chemical and environmental sensitivities.
- to ensure access to needed rehabilitation equipment.
- to adequately address persons with chronic disabilities compared to acute rehabilitation or health care.
- to increase the number of persons with disabilities who regularly participate in physical recreation and active living activities.
- to increase the involvement of persons with disabilities in the planning and priority setting process on matters related to sport and recreation for which they will be participants.

- to educate recreation providers on the need to make their facilities and programs inclusive and barrier-free.
- to enhance the capacity of leisure, recreation and sport organizations to fully include persons with disabilities.
- to increase the emphasis and on-going commitment to prevent chronic health problems and disability (i.e. injury prevention, tobacco use reduction, active living, lifestyle education, environmental safety, prenatal care, etc.).

6. RESEARCH - GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- to improve the availability of current demographic information on citizens with disabilities necessary for outcome measurements and for program planning.
- to encourage documentation and promotion of examples of best practices in social programs.
- to promote research that will help support more evidence based decision making on matters related to disability issues.
- to undertake and promote research and information on the prevention of disability.

VI RECOMMENDATIONS

Please note that the following recommendations are not necessarily listed in order of priority. They are also not necessarily a final list of all options for actions under provincial government jurisdiction.

Unless specified otherwise, each recommendation is intended to apply to all types and levels of disabilities. While lead departments are identified, one should assume that other departments, government agencies and community agencies involved in disability services and issues will be involved in achieving effective solutions to these matters.

1.	FULL CITIZENSHIP
a)	Inclusive Communities
b)	Consumer Involvement
c)	Awareness and Attitudes
d)	Leadership/Effective Partnerships

1. **The province of New Brunswick must establish a process, in partnership with persons with disabilities and community agencies involved with disability issues to create a comprehensive integrated policy framework for persons with disabilities in New Brunswick which is consistent with this Action Plan and with other recommendations from community agencies involved with disability issues. The policy framework must include a timeframe for completion with a formal adoption and implementation plan by government. There should be an annual report to the Legislature on progress with respect to the implementation of the objectives and content of the policy framework.**

   - ***Department of Family and Community Services***
   - ***Executive Council Office***
   - ***Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons***

   Response from the Department of Family and Community Services:
   A pilot project has been developed by the Department of Family and Community Services to test the feasibility of the new approach, recommended by the Disability Framework Implementation Committee, for the delivery of disability supports to adults with disabilities
   The pilot project was implemented in Region 3 (Fredericton - Woodstock) and in Region 4 (Edmundston – Grand-Falls)

The duration of the pilot projects will be two years, and commenced in April 2005

The pilot projects will provide government with important information related to this new approach.

The implementation of a new Disability Support Program in the province will be contingent upon the pilot project's evaluation results.

An evaluation of the pilot project commenced in January 2006. The results of the evaluation will be submitted to Government who will then decide on future directions for the delivery of supports to persons with disabilities.

2. **The provincial government must support and promote an annual public awareness week to draw attention to issues of interest to persons with disabilities in New Brunswick and to recognize positive achievements carried out in the preceding year.**

- ***Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons***

Response from the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons:

Partners and sponsorship funding have continued to be outlined for N.B. Disability Awareness Week including the current year of 2006. The provincial government is an active supporter for this annual program.

3. **The various programs of government relating to supporting the tourism industry must draw attention to the potential market and needs of customers with various disabilities who require barrier-free access to facilities, accommodations, and transportation services.**

- ***Department of Tourism and Parks***

Response from Tourism and Parks:

The Department continues to monitor its tourism infrastructure (Provincial Parks, Village Historique Acadien, Kings Landing, Aquarium and Marine Centre) for their level of accessibility for people with disabilities, and make improvements when renovations are carried out. The Province's seven Visitor Information Centres are fully accessible.

The Miscou Island development project is underway, and will continue to be built to provide barrier free access.

The Department of Tourism and Parks encourages tourism operators to provide barrier free activities, facilities and attractions. Consideration is also being given to highlight barrier free attractions and operators in packages promoted in the Province's travel guides. Consultation will be carried out with industry stakeholders in this regard.

4. **The Province of New Brunswick must release ongoing information to disability organizations and to the public on discussions with the federal, provincial and territorial governments on a national strategy for disability issues as outlined in the *In Unison* report.**

- ***Department of Family and Community Services***

Response from the Department of Family and Community Services:
In August of 2005 the FPT Benefits and Services Working Group for Persons with Disabilities held an information sharing forum with a number of national disability organizations as part of the on-going FPT work towards advancing the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society.

5. **All government departments and agencies must continue to develop and implement clear yet flexible policies on involving persons with disabilities, their families and other community stakeholders in the planning, delivery and evaluation of their programs and services.**

- ***Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons***

Response from the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons:
The current provincial government has been open to input from stakeholders on any matter of interest to persons with disabilities. There are a number of ongoing advisory committees in place with specific departments as well as the Interdepartmental Committee on the Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick. Other ad hoc committees or working groups have been established when the need is identified.
A person-centered approach is needed in all areas of public programs and services for persons with disabilities.

6. **The Department of Family and Community Services must review the departmental policies related to financial assistance, program eligibility and process requirements for persons with disabilities. This review should involve at least one provincial meeting involving stakeholder groups actively involved in dealing with clients with various types of disabilities.**

- ***Department of Family and Community Services***

Response from the Department of Family and Community Services:
FCS currently sits on the "Employ-*Ability* Action Group" comprised of FCS staff and stakeholder representatives from the disabled community.

7. **All of the various government departments and agencies must be encouraged to collaborate on program planning and delivery in relation to persons with disabilities to reduce duplication of effort and any conflicts in policies, etc.**

- ***Interdepartmental Committee on the Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick***
- ***Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons***

Response from the Interdepartmental Committee on the Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick:

A status report has been published annually on the progress made on the recommendations under the Action Plan. Departments and agencies continue to pursue their collaborative practices of communicating more effectively on the programs and services they offer to persons with disabilities.

8. **The Province of New Brunswick must consult with community stakeholders to design an independent Quality Assurance pilot program to monitor residential services for persons with disabilities.**

- ***Department of Family and Community Services***

Response from the Department of Family and Community Services:

To address the Report's recommendations of the Auditor General in relation to the Adult Residential Facilities Program, the Department of Family and Community Services:

- issued a directive to Regional Adult Residential Facilities Coordinators to conduct unannounced annual inspections
- issued guidelines to regional staff to take appropriate enforcement actions when facilities do not comply with legislation and standards.

The Department is in the process of:

- reviewing and updating standards and procedures for operators of Adult Residential Facilities
- working on the development of a new Inspection Form and Process

The Department will:

- update the Adult Residential Facilities Coordinators standards
- develop a Quality Improvement Assessment Tool that will be used to identify facilities requiring more support
- review the legislation for special care homes and community residences and has undertaken discussions with the Department of Justice for this task.

9. **The Departments of Health and Family and Community Services must host a meeting of interested stakeholders to develop a provincial strategy to better respond to the needs of survivors of serious traumatic brain injuries.**

- ***Department of Health***
- ***Department of Family and Community Services***

Response from the Department of Health:

The Rehabilitation Services Advisory Committee (RSAC) has done some work on identifying gaps in services for persons with traumatic brain injury; and the Department of Health is anticipating their recommendations with respect to this group of clients.

RSAC has also been involved in reviewing the role of mental health in rehab services, and the Department has received several recommendations from them in this respect. The Department of Health and Wellness is in the process of meeting with mental health and rehabilitation services representatives in an attempt to validate perceived gaps in services and to increase understanding and awareness of the current complement of available services and how to access these services.

One strategy being pursued by the Department is to develop better communications between operational divisions (Mental Health Services) and rehab professionals in hospitals and community programs (Extra Mural Program) to facilitate access to assessment and intervention services for rehabilitation client/caregivers (psycho-social services). Discussions are also in progress with respect to the development of an orientation program for rehabilitation professionals regarding services available through Community Mental Health Centres and eligibility for these services, including program definitions of "mental illness".

Department of Health supports the development of continuing education programs for rehab professionals with respect to mental health programs and for mental health professionals with respect to the rehabilitation process.

The Department continues to meet with representatives of the Brain Injury Association of NB with respect to identified needs.

10. **The Premier of New Brunswick must release an official public statement each year during Disability Awareness Week to reconfirm the government's commitment to respond to the needs of persons with disabilities. Such a public statement could include such messages as the desire to involve consumers, families and community stakeholders in both the development and implementation of provincial policies and programs affecting persons with disabilities. The concept of equal access**

to public services and the enjoyment of full status as citizens must not be left unstated for persons with disabilities. All persons have an inalienable right to life and self-determination.

- ***Office of the Premier***
- ***Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons***

Response from the Office of the Premier:
This has been done each year.

11. **The Province of New Brunswick needs to complete and report publicly on their efforts to develop a comprehensive strategy to bring the level of labour force participation among persons with disabilities to the same level as the general population.**

- ***Department of Post-Secondary Education and Training***
- ***Department of Education***
- ***Department of Family and Community Services***
- ***Department of Finance***

Response from the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Training:
Under the auspices of the Ministerial Employ-Ability Action Group, the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Training, in cooperation with the Departments of Family and Community Services and Education, have developed a 3-year work plan that includes all 30 recommendations outlined in the "Labour Market Participation Strategy for Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick" report. Some recommendations have already been addressed, while others are currently being considered.

12. **The Government of New Brunswick must work in conjunction with the aboriginal community and other stakeholders to address the specific issues around access to services for aboriginals with disabilities wherever they live in the province.**

- ***Minister Responsible for the Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat***
- ***Executive Council Office***
- ***Department of Family and Community Services***
- ***Department of Post-Secondary Education and Training***
- ***Department of Health***

Response from the Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat:

The Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat works in close collaboration with the Department of Health on the health related issues of New Brunswick's Aboriginal population, this includes Aboriginal persons with disabilities. It is recognized that the Aboriginal population has a higher incidence of health issues than the general population.

At the November 25th, 2005 First Ministers' and National Aboriginal Leaders' Meeting in Kelowna, health was identified as one of the 5 priority key sectors aimed at "closing the gap" for Aboriginal people. The Province will continue its work on a New Brunswick Aboriginal Health Blueprint, keeping in mind the Government of Canada's constitutional and jurisdictional responsibilities for the health of Aboriginal people living on-reserve, while Aboriginal persons with disabilities living off-reserve have the same access to medical care as all other New Brunswickers.

The Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat has developed a comprehensive approach to deal with Aboriginal issues; this process involves bilateral discussions on a variety of issues including health related issues. As well, in April 2006, the Department of Health hired a Planning and Policy Advisor on Aboriginal Health whose responsibilities include providing advice on health issues pertaining to New Brunswick's Aboriginal community.

Response from the Department of Health:

Aboriginal people in NB (status or non-status, living on or off reserve) have access to the same services as all New Brunswickers in off-reserve settings

13. **Government must encourage community capacity building and voluntary service by enacting "Good Samaritan" legislation to limit liability and to develop other mechanisms to support volunteers for out of pocket expenses. Training, screening, recruitment and coordination costs, etc. for volunteers should be supported by government.**

- ***Department of Family and Community Services***
- ***Department of Justice and Consumer Affairs***

Response from the Department of Family and Community Services:

The Department of Family and Community Services continues to work in collaboration with New Brunswick Association for Community Living (NBACL) and is providing financial assistance for the purpose of developing the capacities of communities to better include persons with disabilities and to assist people in developing connections and relationships with other people in the community.

Response from the Department of Justice and Consumer Affairs:
Government has assessed the implications of "Good Samaritan" legislation. Such legislation comes at a price to victims who would not be able to recover damages that otherwise they would and would provide little protection from lawsuits as a volunteer would almost certainly be made a defendant in any action arising out of his or her actions as a volunteer. For these reasons, government will not be proceeding with "Good Samaritan" Legislation.

14. Assist non-profit community groups with core administration expenses so they can focus on using more donated dollars for direct client services.

- ***Department of Family and Community Services***

Response from the Department of Family and Community Services:
In order to assist with increasing costs, the Department of Family and Community services announced in June 2005 that the per diem rates for clients in community residences will be increased by 6% over the next 3 years.
These changes will increase government expenditures by over $1.2 million when fully implemented.
The first increase became effective June 1, 2005. The next increase will take place on June 1, 2006.

15. That the Government of New Brunswick explore opportunities for funding partnerships with established community-based non-profit organizations as a means of delivering certain services to persons with disabilities.

- ***Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons***

Response from the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons:
Various departments of government already provide funding to some service providers in the non-profit sector to deliver some services to persons with disabilities. We believe that non-profit community based services can be a cost-effective way to ensure quality of services are available to help meet the needs of some citizens with disabilities. Certain disabilities require very specific skills and understanding such as communicating with persons who use sign language or Braille.
Clients should not be off-loaded to the community without resources simply to cut government budgets. We do have a concern with quality assurance and extra costs when social programs are taken over by for-profit groups that have limited knowledge of disability needs.

16. **The province must work in conjunction with the federal government to improve assistance with the costs of disability related supports (i.e. refundable tax credits, etc.).**

- ***Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons***
- ***Department of Intergovernmental Affairs***
- ***Department of Finance***
- ***Department of Family and Community Services***

Response from the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons:
Work has already started on this and some changes were made in the last several years to improve income tax provisions for persons with disabilities. The *In Unison* report has called for further actions on the tax system and the costs of disability supports. The Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons continues to actively lobby on this subject.

Response from the Department of Finance:
The federal/provincial/territorial tax policy committee reviews and discusses such proposals on an ongoing basis. Federal and provincial government priorities dictate whether such items make their way into annual budgets.

2.	**DISABILITY SUPPORTS**
a)	**Barrier-Free Access**
b)	**Personal Supports**
c)	**Communications**
d)	**Accessible and Affordable Housing**
e)	**Transportation**
f)	**Supports to Families/Caregivers**

17. **The Province of New Brunswick must undertake a fundamental reorganization of the Long Term Care Strategy and consult with community stakeholders in designing a new support program for persons with disabilities who have chronic disabilities requiring on-going assistance.**

- ***Department of Family and Community Services***

Response from the Department of Family and Community Services:
The Disability Support Program pilot project will provide government with important information related to a new approach to provide disability supports to adults under the age of 65.
The implementation of a new Disability Support Program in the province will be contingent upon the pilot project's evaluation results.

18. **Effective supports must be in place to enable families with severely disabled family members to keep that member at home. Nursing home placements must not be the only option available especially for younger adults.**

- ***Department of Family and Community Services***

Response from the Department of Family and Community Services:
The intent of the Long Term Care Program is to assist frail and vulnerable seniors and adults with long-term limitations to remain in their own home as long as possible. Only when in-home services is no longer an option that a residential placement is considered. Nursing home placement is only considered as a last resort for younger adults.

19. **The departments must review their procedures to avoid clients having to accept more expensive services than required in order to meet the criteria of a particular program. In such situations clients should be allowed to use a less expensive alternative not covered by said policy.**

- ***Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons***
- ***Executive Council Office***

Response from the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons:
Some progress has been achieved on this issue. Progress has been made through the Department of Family and Community Services to clarify policies around eligibility for health services cards in some situations where the client is not eligible for income assistance.

20. **The Premier's Council should pursue a campaign to encourage government and private sector information providers to accommodate the needs of persons with vision difficulties in choosing the size and font of print used for public information (i.e. telephone directories, labeling of prescription and over-the-counter drugs, government forms, food packaging, etc.).**

- ***Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons***

Response from the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons:
There are many players involved in the labeling and printing of information used by consumers in the marketplace. This will be an on-going objective for the Premier's Council in conjunction with other groups like the CNIB and associations representing older adults, etc. The NB Vision Awareness Committee has been created to address issues related to persons with vision problems.

Response from Service New Brunswick:
By the end of 2006, SNB online services will be improved so that visually impaired individuals will have an easier time viewing information contained on the website.

21. **The Minister of Supply and Services promote standards of technology and software within government that will be compatible with that required for access by various types of disability users such as blind or visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, intellectual disabilities, etc.**

- ***Department of Supply and Services***

Response from the Department of Supply and Services:
The Department continues to support and enable the improvement of standards of technology and software that are compatible for access by disabled persons.

Response from Service New Brunswick:
SNB voluntarily adheres to most of the standards identified by the www Consortium with respect to providing services to disabled individuals. Some recommendations are deemed cost prohibitive to implement.

22. **Libraries across the province should improve the quantity of and access to their talking book services and larger print publications to address a wider range of age groups and language choice. They should also not limit the service to Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) clients as some persons with reading disabilities or physical limitations cannot effectively use printed books.**

- ***Department of Education***

Response from the Department of Education – Anglophone Sector:
Part One:
New Brunswick Public Library Service (NBPLS) is committed to the development of its talking book and large print collections. NBPLS launched the provincial library catalogue online in 2002. This important new service makes it easier for all New Brunswickers, including caregivers and family members, to choose books from home and to verify if a book is available before coming in to the library. In addition to this, initiatives such as the loan of materials between library regions maximize the availability of these collections to all New Brunswickers. The collections contain both French and English titles with the language concentration determined by the demand in the area being served.
Talking books are delivered free of charge to patrons at their home through a special program for the visually handicapped offered by Canada Post. All fines and fees for lost and overdue books are waived for talking book patrons.
The New Brunswick public library system participates in national level resource sharing which allows us access through InterLibrary Loan to other resources for the visually handicapped, including those in languages other than French and English. This service is particularly useful in meeting the research needs of visually handicapped students.
The province's public library system makes every effort to maximize and strengthen its resources. Nevertheless, this service could certainly benefit from increased funding.
Part Two: Limitations of Use
The public library system strives to interpret the license agreements of the publishers of talking books as generously as possible. Public libraries must honour the terms of the license agreements in order to be able to purchase

the titles covered by the agreements. If public libraries violate license terms, they risk losing the right to purchase discounted talking book titles.

It is not necessary to be a CNIB client to be eligible to use the talking book service. Service is also extended to patrons who are physically unable to read but do not necessarily fall within the CNIB services mandate. This latitude has allowed public libraries to serve more than just persons living with loss of vision. New Brunswick public libraries also serve, for example, those with dyslexia and Parkinson's Disease. In cases where qualification for the service is ambiguous, the New Brunswick Public Library Service verifies with CNIB that the terms of the license are met.

The public library system also maintains a collection of more than 57,000 recordings of music and abridged and full-length books that are available to all library patrons. These products are not produced at a discount for persons living with loss of vision.

23. **That the online availability of the Premier's Council's *Directory of Services Offered to Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick* and their other information resources be promoted to all government departments and agencies.**

- ***Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons***

Response from the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons:

The Directory of Services Offered to Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick and other information resources produced by the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons have been updated and are available on-line and in alternate formats. They are promoted and distributed on an on-going basis.

24. **Government departments with services or programs open to persons with disabilities must ensure that policies and eligibility criteria are made publicly available through such mediums as websites, the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons' *Directory of Services Offered to Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick*, media releases and regular updates to key community groups.**

- ***Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons***
- ***Department of Family and Community Services***
- ***Executive Council Office***

Response from the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons:
Access to information about departmental programs has been improved with the use of updated websites for departments as well as the materials shared through the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons.

Response from Service New Brunswick:
All sites that are wheelchair accessible (32) are identified as such in the SNB online information.

25. **Information must be prepared and circulated to develop awareness of emergency procedures to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities in such situations as a fire or evacuation from a government facility.**

- ***Department of Public Safety***
- ***Department of Supply and Services***

Response from the Department of Public Safety:
A brochure on emergency procedures to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities in such situations as fire or evacuation from government facilities has been distributed to all government facilities and posted on Department of Public Safety's website. The Department of Public Safety will continue to work closely with the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons on this matter.

Response from the Department of Supply and Services:
The Department of Supply and Services assisted the Department of Public Safety in the distribution of the referenced brochure.

Response from Service New Brunswick:
All SNB sites accessible by the public have included a specific section in their evacuation plans that deal with evacuating persons with disabilities

26. **The Department of Supply and Services strictly enforce barrier-free access standards for all government owned and leased space using the national standard entitled *Barrier-Free Design Standard CAN/CSA-B651-95* until such time as this standard has been superseded by the national and/or provincial building code. The Department of Supply and Services will deal with the non-conformance to barrier-free standards with existing leases, at the expiry date of the lease. A lease will not be renewed until barrier-free standards are incorporated into the premises.**

- ***Department of Supply and Services***

Response from the Department of Supply and Services:
The Department of Supply and Services agrees with this recommendation: The Department continues to support the enhancement of barrier-free access for all government owned and leased space and is working with landlords and government departments to increase awareness of the standards for barrier-free access.

Response from Service New Brunswick:
32 of the 36 physical locations of SNB have met the compliance standards with respect to wheelchair accessibility (i.e. ramps, automatic doors, etc). The 4 sites that are not wheelchair accessible include Grand Manan, Hopewell Cape, Port Elgin (provincially owned sites) and Gagetown (privately owned site). These buildings are older and because of their building design are unable to be modified to accommodate wheel chair accessibility.

27. **Municipalities, building inspectors, architects, contractors and entrepreneurs be required to correct barrier-free access problems on building projects that proceed subject to significant penalties for non-compliance with building code requirements.**

- ***Department of Local Government***
- ***Department of Supply and Services***
- ***Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons***

Response from the Department of Local Government:
The barrier-free access provisions of the provincial building code are extremely important to persons with disabilities. This applies to customers, tenants, visitors, employees and owners and employers with disabilities. Developers should not be allowed to get away with failure to meet the minimum standards. Enforcement must be improved in consultation with municipal building inspectors and local authorities.
Response from the Department of Supply and Services:
The Department of Supply and Services supports this recommendation and expects barrier free access to be provided in its projects.

28. **Information packages, training workshops and on-site access evaluation and planning be available to architects, landlords, businesses, chambers of commerce, labour groups, community facilities and others wishing advice on how to improve barrier-free access to existing buildings or planned projects.**

- ***Department of Local Government***
- ***Department of Supply and Services***
- ***Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons***

Response from the Department of Local Government:
Information is available already but is not consistently distributed and utilized due to lack of awareness and fear of adding costs to the building or renovation project. Appropriate community groups could assist in this initiative.

Response from the Department of Supply and Services:
The Department of Supply and Services works with some of these stakeholders to ensure/improve barrier-free access to government buildings.

29. **The Department of Education will maintain a current list of pending barrier-free access projects for all public school buildings in the province. The list should give an indication of what work is required, priority assigned, budget required and expected timetable for completion.**

- ***Department of Education***
- ***Department of Supply and Services***

Response from the Department of Education:
Barrier free access to schools continues to be a priority in managing the school physical plant infrastructure. This is achieved in two ways. The closing of old schools, with community support, through consolidation and construction of new schools provides an opportunity to provide new barrier free facilities to students, teachers, parents and administrators. A number of major capital projects throughout the Province are currently in progress.
The second avenue for removing barriers is to identify projects under the Capital Improvements Program. Projects are identified and incorporated in the physical plant database prepared by districts that includes project scope, budget requirements, and priority in order to bring full accessibility to schools. This includes ramps, elevators, washrooms, and other renovation requirements. Specific projects are completed each year in response to requests by school districts. Furthermore, all projects are completed in compliance with the National Building Code, which includes full accessibility.
The strategy identified above is consistent with the continuing policy for removing physical barriers for incoming disabled students and for all other persons, including teachers, parents, and others who require access to schools.

Response from the Department of Supply and Services:
The Department of Supply and Services provides a supporting role to the Department of Education in this function.

30. **The province should ensure that any public recreation facilities leased by private operators require compliance and support for barrier-free access standards (i.e. campgrounds, parks, golf courses, etc.).**

- ***Department of Tourism and Parks***

Response from the Department of Tourism and Parks:
The Department partners with private operators whenever possible to ensure appropriate access to facilities. Upgrades have been carried out at privately operated provincial parks in this regard. The Department will continue to work with operators to leverage funding for renovations and improvements.

31. **Barrier-free design features be promoted by the Province for all public and private housing projects in New Brunswick.**

- ***Department of Local Government***
- ***Department of Family and Community Services***

Response from the Department of Local Government:
Current demographics of New Brunswick show a very high rate of disability in the population as well as a higher percentage of older adults. This should be recognized in the design of future private and/or public housing stock for the province.
Public housing owned and administered by the Province incorporates barrier-free access wherever there is a demand and it is practical and feasible.

32. **The province must promote access to community recreational facilities by offering small amounts of seed grants and to identify other sources of potential funding to cover costs associated with improving barrier-free access.**

- ***Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport***

Response from the Department of Wellness, Culture & Sport:
The Department agrees with the recommendation of the Premier's Council. This program has been in place for some time. Each year, via our regional offices, we provide small grant allocations to various groups to assist with the construction of ramps, purchase of special equipment and to improve

playground access for children with disabilities. Over the past three budget years, a total of $10,000 has been provided as our contribution towards barrier-free access to recreation in the province.
New Brunswick hosted the 2003 Canada Winter Games held in the Bathurst/Campbellton region. The Sport, Recreation and Active Living Branch was a key partner, working with the host society, in the preparation and coordination of games logistics. In working with the host society, much attention was placed on accessibility. Wheelchair Basketball was one of 21 sports being highlighted at the games. The host society was proactive in planning for the needs of both the athletes and spectators with disabilities. Assessments were done prior to the hosting of the games to determine the level of accessibility of venues as well as the athlete's village. The provincial government was directly involved with the development of the "athletes village" in which a number of accommodation units will be built and accessible to athletes who use wheelchairs.

33. **Funding from provincial government sources to municipal or community programs and/or facilities for sport or recreation must require a review of barrier-free access status and the record of inclusion for participants with disabilities. Plans to remedy any deficits would have to be implemented in order to secure future funding.**

- ***Minister Responsible for Regional Development Corporation***

Response from the Regional Development Corporation:
This recommendation will require some consultation with disability groups to determine how the evaluation should be done and who would carry it out in order for the applicant to be accepted for funding.

34. **The Government of New Brunswick must explore mechanisms to assist in the survival of non-profit community partners by exploring such options as core funding, rental space, access to government purchasing power for reduced costs in supplies and equipment, training on information technology, access to bidding on government contracts, etc.**

- ***Department of Family and Community Services***
- ***Department of Supply and Services***

Response from the Department of Family and Community Services:
Non-Profit Housing groups involved in the provision of housing for people with disabilities can now benefit from one of two mechanisms to reduce the amount of property taxes paid on their properties. In addition to the existing

Assessment Reduction Program from which many service groups have benefited, last year the government introduced an exemption to the provincial portion of property taxes paid by non-profit groups who provide housing for low income households. These initiatives have resulted in substantial reductions in operating costs for housing providers serving people with disabilities.

35. **The Department of Family and Community Services must consult with hard of hearing advocates, nursing home and special care home staff and residents to identify ways to respond to the needs of hard of hearing residents living in nursing homes and special care homes.**

- ***Department of Family and Community Services***

Response from the Department of Family and Community Services:
The Department of Family and Community Services supports the concept of consulting the advocates for clients who are hard of hearing or deaf to assist with responding to their needs.
Individuals entering nursing homes or special care homes go through an assessment process, which includes a health profile. If there were a hearing issue it would be addressed in the client's case plan.

36. **The Province of New Brunswick must establish an interdepartmental committee with community representation to develop a strategy that could lead to more persons with disabilities being able to find affordable, accessible and decent housing.**

- ***Department of Family and Community Services***
- ***Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons***

Response from the Department of Family and Community Services:
As of September 30, 2005, 17 rent supplement and 50 new construction housing units for disabled households have been created through the Affordable Rental Housing Program (ARHP). It is expected that additional new units will also be created through the ARHP. People with disabilities remain a high priority target group for the existing subsidized rental housing portfolio as well.

37. **Dental services under the provincial health card benefits should be expanded to cover more than extractions of teeth.**

- ***Department of Family and Community Services***

Response from the Department of Family and Community Services:
The dental benefit policy has been identified by the department as one which should be reviewed within the overall budget process and potentially expanded.
The Department remains committed to reviewing its policies and examining how business is conducted.

38. The Department of Family and Community Services needs to review, revise and clarify policies for health card benefits and/or special items directly related to disability for persons who do not qualify for social assistance.

- ***Department of Family and Community Services***

Response from the Department of Family and Community Services:
As of September 1, 2005, Health Card only clients and low-income individuals who are eligible for a Health Card who have been diagnosed with diabetes and are insulin dependent became eligible for coverage for their insulin and their diabetic supplies. Diabetic supplies include glucose test strips, urine test strips, lancets, syringes, alcohol and swabs. The Department will continue to review its policies on health card items and special benefits and ensure that the needs of people with disabilities are taken into consideration.
FCS currently sits on the Employ-*Ability* Action Group. This group is working on reviewing and clarifying policies related to the health card.

39. The Rental Assistance Plan for Disabled persons be opened up to allow new applicants to qualify for funding.

- ***Department of Family and Community Services***

Response from the Department of Family and Community Services:
As of September 30, 2005, 17 rent supplement and 50 new construction housing units for disabled households have been created through the Affordable Rental Housing Program (ARHP). It is expected that additional new units will also be created through the ARHP. People with disabilities remain a high priority target group for the existing subsidized rental housing portfolio as well.

40. **The Government of New Brunswick must seek information on current insurance industry practices relating to the coverage of claims for accident and long-term disability. Some insurance companies are trying to off-load responsibilities by accessing public or community resources. The issue of coverage for persons with pre-existing conditions also needs to be reviewed. We must ensure reasonable access to health insurance for all citizens whether employed or not.**

- ***Department of Family and Community Services***

Response from the Department of Family and Community Services:
Some of these issues have been raised with the meetings of the Legislature's Select Committee on Private Automobile Insurance Rates. The Department of Health has also increased efforts to recover appropriate care costs for accident victims covered by insurance. The Department of Family and Community Services does provide Health Card Benefits for certain eligible citizens in need of health benefits to cover pre-existing conditions. The Department welcomes input from community stakeholders with any specific suggestions to help ensure that insurance companies are not off-loading their responsibilities to the public system in cases where an individual has paid premiums for private insurance coverage.

41. **The Vehicle Retrofit Program be continued and also be open to taxi operators wishing to adapt a vehicle to carry passengers with a disability at standard taxi fares.**

- ***Department of Transportation***

Response from the Department of Transportation:
The Department of Transportation continues to administer the Vehicle Retrofit Program. The program is available to taxi operators who wish to adapt a vehicle for the needs of disabled passengers.

42. **Municipalities must be encouraged to use provincial legislation and municipal by-laws to actively enforce parking spots for registered permit holders for persons with disabilities. The Department of Transportation should send out an annual letter on this topic and produce a statement for the media to indicate how many municipalities have their own additional by-law on this matter.**

- ***Department of Public Safety***
- ***Department of Transportation***
- ***Department of Local Government***

Response from the Department of Public Safety:
Department of Public Safety will contact all municipalities that do not have municipal by-laws regarding enforcement of designated parking spaces for the disabled to encourage the enactment of local by-laws. We will also contact municipalities that already have municipal by-laws to encourage them to actively follow an effective enforcement strategy with respect to designated parking spaces for the disabled who are registered permit holders and have displayed the parking placard for the disabled.

Response from the Department of Transportation:
The provincial disabled parking placard program was transferred from the Motor Vehicle branch of the Department of Transportation to the Department of Public Safety in 2001.

43. The Department of Transportation must convene a meeting of stakeholders to review the Vehicle Retrofit Program, Disabled Parking Permits and the overall issue of transportation for persons with disabilities in New Brunswick.

- ***Department of Transportation***
- ***Department of Public Safety***

Response from the Department of Transportation:
Provincial stakeholder workshops were held in 2001 and 2003 to discuss issues pertaining to transportation for persons with disabilities. As a result of feedback from stakeholders, the Vehicle Retrofit Program was expanded.

44. The provincial standards on the appropriate signage, size and paint markings and use of reserved parking spaces for persons with disabilities must be sent to all municipalities and media outlets on an annual basis.

- ***Department of Public Safety***
- ***Department of Transportation***

Response from the Department of Public Safety:
The information with respect to appropriate signage, size and paint markings and use of reserved parking spaces for persons with disabilities is on the Public Safety website. Use of this resource by municipalities and business owners is encouraged regularly.
The Department of Public Safety will work closely with the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons, when they are ready to do so, to

develop policy promoting safe and proper use of wheelchairs, electric wheelchairs and electric scooters designed for use by persons with a disability, on sidewalks and highways.

Response from the Department of Transportation:
The Department of Transportation will advise as necessary on the provincial standards for signage of reserved parking spaces for persons with disabilities in support of the Department of Public Safety.

45. The Department of Public Safety must create a computer registry of all disabled parking permit holders to allow verification of users.

- ***Department of Public Safety***

Response from the Department of Public Safety:
The recommendation was made in 2001 that Department of Public Safety create a registry for all users of the parking for the disabled placard system. At that time it was not possible to use the Motor Vehicle Data System to capture the information. A decision was made to develop a program within the Provincial Government Consolidated Registrations System (CRA) to capture information related to disabled parking permit holders. The program has been in use since January of 2002. Currently there are over 20,000 active placard holders registered in the system. The authorized user of this program is the Motor Vehicle Branch. In order to ensure the protection of personal information, employees of the Motor Vehicle Branch have received training related to the *Protection of Personal Information Act.*

46. The Department of Public Safety must issue an annual media release to encourage persons to identify any users of reserved parking placards who may not be entitled to do so.

- ***Department of Public Safety***
- ***Department of Transportation***

Response from the Department of Public Safety:
The Department of Public Safety continues to work closely with the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons on this matter. An article to increase awareness and the importance of the Disabled Parking Program will be developed and forwarded to various media outlets throughout the province to coincide with Disability Awareness Week.

47. **Ensure that students with disabilities are able to access curricular and extracurricular activities including those held outside of regular school hours.**

- ***Department of Education***

Response from the Department of Education:

Response from the Anglophone Sector:

The English Educational Services Division continues to support and advocate for the position that all students, including those with disabilities, should have access to both curricular and extra-curricular activities, including those held outside of regular school hours. This goal remains as one of the "Best Practices for Inclusion" document.

Response from the Francophone Sector:

The students with disabilities are able to participate in both curricular and extra-curricular activities organized by the schools.

48. **New Brunswick must review and improve the barrier-free access requirements and enforcement of our next provincial building code.**

- ***Department of Local Government***
- ***Department of Supply and Services***
- ***Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons***

Response from the Department of Local Government:

The next building code is likely to use an objective based approach for any new standards to be added to the current national building code. We need to protect provisions relating to barrier-free access for persons with disabilities.

49. **The province must develop a clear policy on services to children with disabilities in consultation with stakeholders which must also address the issue of children being placed on waiting lists.**

- ***Department of Family and Community Services***
- ***Department of Education***
- ***Executive Council Office***
- ***Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons***
- ***Department of Health***

Response from the Department of Education:

Response from the Francophone Sector: The Department of Education supports the development of a concept of integrated services to better meet the various needs of students in New Brunswick schools. This concept pursues the objective of offering the educational, physical, social, emotional, and cultural support students need in order to learn, as part of a holistic approach, and removing the obstacles to learning and being successful in life. It is also designed to increase the self-sufficiency of families and expand their responsibility with regard to the education and welfare of the children.

The Quality Learning Agenda refers to the need for the Department of Health and the Department of Family and Community Services (FCS) to cooperate with the Department of Education to better meet the needs of certain students. To that end, over the next two years, the Department of Education will prepare a government-wide plan with the involvement of FCS and Health to ensure that there is a sufficient number of non-teaching professionals to support learning in the classroom and the student's individual performance.

EDUCATION/EMPLOYMENT

a) Education and Training
b) Employment Outcomes

Job Retention/Advancement

Response from the Department of Health:

The Interdepartmental Committee on Services to Persons With Autism submitted their report, A Framework for an Integrated Service Delivery System for Persons with Autism in New Brunswick, to the Department of Health and Wellness in December 2001. The report was filed with the Clerk's office and tabled on September 30, 2002.

- Included in report is a history of initiatives taken by government from 1982 to present, government services currently offered, and recommendations for future planning.
- Recommendations were presented for a policy framework and for short and long term service strategies.
- Best practice tables outlining recommendations for individual and government partner roles and responsibilities were also presented. (11-02)
- This report continues to be used as a template for implementing recommendations and service delivery design.

The three government departments (FCS, Education and DH) have developed responses to the report "A Framework for an Integrated Service Delivery System for Persons With Autism in New Brunswick". As well,

these departments have developed: 1) long-term plan for service delivery model that includes standards for agency intervention services for pre-school children with ASD; 2) A long term training initiative for support workers and clinical specialists for ASD intervention, in partnership with the University of New Brunswick; 3) A funding approval process to support community Autism centres for family support in NB.

The infrastructure for Autism includes funding assistance in 2005-2006 for evidenced-based services ($1.8 million) administered by the DFCS; a training and clinical supervision strategy ($700,000) administered by DFCS; and funding of community support initiatives ($300,000) administered by DH and funded by DFCS.

The DH has developed criteria for ensuring that community support initiatives make available social support, self-help, public education, and community inclusion to the citizens of NB. To date, the DHW in partnership with the Department of Education has approved four contribution grants for Community Autism centres.

Following the success of the Early Language Pilot sites in Health Regions 2 and 6, the Early Language Services will be implemented provincially over a two-year process. This prevention, promotion, and community capacity building service is currently being implemented in RHAs 1 South-East, 2, 4, 6, and 7. As of April 1, 2005, it is expected that RHAs 1 Beauséjour, 3, and 5 will also be implementing this service. Goals of the Early Language Service include:

- The prevention of communication delays.
- The promotion of healthy language development, language learning, and early literacy development.
- The promotion of social communication.
- The identification and/or promotion of awareness of early signs of pre-school children at risk of developing, or currently presenting with communication disorders.
- The provision of group experiences for communication disorders/delays.
- The facilitation of an easier transition into school.

3.	**EDUCATION/EMPLOYMENT**
a)	**Education and Training**
b)	**Employment Outcomes**
c)	**Job Retention/Advancement**

50. The provincial government must confirm who is responsible for providing alternate format educational material for persons undergoing post-secondary training.

- ***Department of Post-Secondary Education and Training***
- ***Department of Education***

Response from the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Training:
Training and Employment Support Services (TESS) provides support services to clients who are in post-secondary education, including alternate format educational materials for clients who are in post-secondary training. It should also be mentioned that DPET and FCS, under the auspices of the Ministerial Employ-Ability Action Group, will be working together to ensure that departmental literature pertaining to training and employment are available in alternate formats.

51. The Department of Education shall make every effort to ensure that financial and human resources targeted for the benefit of service to students with disabilities shall actually be used for those purposes.

- ***Department of Education***

Response from the Department of Education:
Response from the Anglophone Sector:
Funding for students with exceptionalities is targeted funding and may only be used for that purpose. The English Educational Services division allocates funding on a census or block basis, depending upon how many students a district has. Districts have the responsibility to use those funds based upon the needs as determined at district level, and within the context of students with exceptionalities. All special education funding is intended to address the learning process and procedures for these students.
Response from the Francophone Sector:
The funds are distributed equitably between the Francophone school districts, but the districts are free to allocate resources according to identified needs.

In the context of the Quality Learning Agenda, the Francophone sector is undertaking an in-depth analysis of the delivery of services and programs for exceptional students, which will provide an opportunity for a review of existing practices and the chance to improve them if necessary.

52. **The Ad Hoc committee of various disability related organizations known as Dialogue on Education shall continue regular meetings with the Department of Education and/or school district officials to share information on issues and opportunities for students with disabilities.**

- ***Department of Education***

Response from the Department of Education:

Response from Anglophone Sector:

The Student Services Unit of the Educational Programs and Services Branch shall continue to hold regular meetings with the Dialogue on Education group, as has been the case for the past number of years. The meeting dates are now established as being the second Friday of May and September.

Response from Francophone Sector:

The Francophone sector of the Department of Education intends to pursue this initiative.

53. **The Minister of Education act to confirm licensing requirements for all future teachers in New Brunswick to include a required component course dealing with students with disabilities to be taught by a competent instructor who has experience in teaching students with disabilities in an inclusive/integrated classroom.**

- ***Department of Education***

Response from the Department of Education (Francophone Sector):

In order to receive an Education degree, all students at the Université de Moncton must have taken the course *Pupils in Difficulty*. Students in the elementary concentration must also have taken *Remediation and Enrichment*, and those in secondary must also have taken *Differentiated Learning*. The *Special Education* course is also available.

In addition, a minor in special education recognized by the New Brunswick Department of Education is the equivalent of an 18-credit concentration in special education at the university level. This minor is available to students currently enrolled in an elementary program or in one of the combined secondary programs.

54. **A consistent and adequate policy be developed for mandatory use related to the training, management and use of all teacher aides and attendants hired to work with teachers who have students with disabilities in their classrooms in the public school system. Training time should be paid and made a condition of employment.**

- ***Department of Education***

Response from the Department of Education (Francophone Sector):
Increasingly, teaching assistants hired by the districts have had two years of training at the Campbellton Campus of the Collège Communautaire, and every year in the Francophone school districts a training plan is developed for the teaching assistants to support them in their work with the students. Resource teachers at each school work closely with the teaching assistants, orienting them on the action to take based on the intervention plan or the special education program set out for each student.

55. **The Department of Education must adopt a policy that when a student is suspected of having a serious learning disability, they must not have to wait more than three months to have a professional assessment arrangement which will include identifying the problem and offering a plan with options to accommodate the learning disability. The assessment report and program plan ideas will be copied immediately for the parent/guardian of the student and the lead classroom teacher involved with that student.**

- ***Department of Education***

Response from the Department of Education (Anglophone Sector):
With the introduction of the electronic Special Education Plan (E-SEP), greater consistency of educational planning throughout the province will be achieved. Critical "best practices' were revisited with Resource teachers from throughout the province during the in service that accompanied the E-SEP training. The document "*Supporting the SEP Process*" currently in draft, also draws attention to the fact that appropriate educational planning and intervention needs to start when a child first evidences a delay. Appropriate educational planning includes investigating the cause(s) of the delay(s) through various types of informal and formal assessment, as warranted, conducted at the school or district level.

Response from the Department of Education (Francophone Sector):
The school districts try to respond as quickly as possible to the needs of students with learning difficulties. To that end, the districts have school psychometrists, school psychologists, resource teachers, and other professionals available who can do a complete assessment in their area of expertise.
Also, since 2004, the resource teachers have received at least 11 days of training in assessment and reading intervention. The Instructional Services Branch is currently testing an assessment and intervention program for students with serious reading disorders.

56. The Department of Education must prepare an overview listing what services are provided to students who have been determined to have a serious learning disability, and how they are effective in enabling the student to adequately prepare for post-secondary education or employment.

- ***Department of Education***

Response from the Department of Education (Anglophone Sector):
The area of planning for post–secondary education or employment for students identified as having a serious learning disability is currently being addressed by the Ministerial Employment Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Action Group. The Department of Education has proposed and committed to a number of actions (including action research projects) that will facilitate the transition of these students. In addition, the Department is hosting a "Career Awareness Exposition" for two days in the spring that will bring together all English school guidance counsellors in the province and will provide an opportunity to focus on the need for early and collaborative planning in this area.

Response from the Department of Education (Francophone Sector):
The Department of Education will provide an effective transition to postsecondary studies through the intervention plan. Provincial school guidance and special education officials will start a process during 2006-2007 involving services and information sharing with the persons responsible in each of the Francophone districts to ensure continuity and uniformity of action in order to maintain and facilitate access to postsecondary education for special needs students.

57. **The Department of Education must prepare an overview listing what services are provided to students in the school system who are blind or visually impaired, and how they are effective in enabling the student to adequately prepare for post-secondary education or employment.**

- ***Department of Education***

Response from the Department of Education (Francophone Sector):
Itinerant teachers working with visually impaired students help those students develop both their academic and life skills. During their years at school, the objectives contained in the learning plans of those students focus on success in academic subjects and preparation for postsecondary education or the labour market. Specific activities to facilitate the transition are undertaken every year from Grades 9 to 12.

58. **The Department of Education must prepare an overview listing what services are provided to students in the school system who are deaf or hard of hearing, and how they are effective in enabling the student to adequately prepare for post-secondary education or employment.**

- ***Department of Education***

Response from the Department of Education (Francophone Sector):
Just like the services described in recommendation 57, itinerant teachers who work with deaf or hearing impaired students help them to develop their academic and life skills. During their years at school, the objectives contained in the learning plans of those students focus on success in academic subjects and preparation for postsecondary education or the labour market.

59. **The Department of Education must prepare a report to review the impact of new classroom and school policies on discipline and how students with disabilities are being affected.**

- ***Department of Education***

Response from the Department of Education (Anglophone Sector):
In conjunction with the Positive Learning Environment Policy, the document "Positive Behaviour Interventions & Supports – A Whole School Approach to Discipline" encourages a collaborative approach to discipline, and provides research based interventions and procedures for schools to employ to create a more positive learning environment for all children including those with disabilities.

60. **Policies and funding be in place to respond in a timely fashion to the personal care needs of individuals with disabilities involved in post-secondary education or training programs.**

- ***Department of Post-Secondary Education and Training***
- ***Department of Family and Community Services***
- ***Department of Education***

Response from the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Training:
Efforts continued to be made to streamline Training and Employment Support Services (TESS). The program provides support services for students in Post-Secondary Education.

61. **Appropriate resources including effective vocational counselling and vocational assessment resources where needed must be readily available to assist a person with a disability in understanding options to choose from for training and career planning. These services require an understanding of different disabilities and labour market requirements.**

- ***Department of Post-Secondary Education and Training***
- ***Department of Education***
- ***Department of Family and Community Services***

Response from the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Training:
Persons with disabilities have access to the full menu of programs and services currently being delivered by the Department. The Department has also contracted with several service providers across the Province for the delivery of employment counselling services that specifically target persons with disabilities.
In 2003-2004, the amount of funding for Training and Employment Support Services (TESS) was doubled to $1.5 Million. This commitment will further ensure that clients can access the above noted services.
The Department is also committed to improving access to its current menu of programs and services. The Program Design and Support Branch has recently set up a Priority Group Working Group to review programs and services to determine what could be done to increase the participation rate of persons with disabilities.

62. **The Province of New Brunswick must announce a staffing plan to increase the representation of qualified persons with disabilities in the civil service. This should include new persons coming in, opportunities for promotion of those already employed, and also to explore the possibility of home-based employment links. Positions should be spread out over both entry level and management level jobs. We are concerned with the retention of jobs for employees with disabilities.**

- ***Office of Human Resources***
- ***Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons***

Response from the Office of Human Resources:
Government has made important strides towards the promotion of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. The Office of Human Resources encourages the use of the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program as well as inclusive staffing policies to hiring departments. OHR is implementing an e-recruitment option for EEO clients. This application will allow EEO clients to submit and maintain an on-line resume that will then be made available to Departments when they search for candidates. EEO clients will also be able to use the application to apply for jobs that are advertised to the general public as well as for in-service competitions. Through policies such as the one on *Alternate Work Arrangements*, the province continues to support home based employment and other initiatives that help with the hiring, promotion and retention of qualified persons with disabilities at all levels of government.

Response from Service New Brunswick:
There are examples within SNB where individuals with disabilities have been accommodated in order to be part of the SNB team. In addition, there is a non-discrimination clause contained within the SNB Code of Ethics.

63. **The Department of Education must address the issues and outcomes necessary to improve the transition of students with higher level of needs within different levels of the public school system.**

- ***Department of Education***

Response from the Department of Education (Francophone Sector):
Since 2004, all schools in the Francophone sector have had a document called *Plan d'intervention* (special education plan), which enables them to help special needs students. The special education plan proposes a planning and collaborative process between the members of the school team, parents,

and the child, favours a solution-oriented approach, is based on a holistic vision of the student, helps organize educational activities centred around student success, and takes into account an assessment of the student's needs and abilities. This document serves as a basis for preparation of the student's transition plan.

64. **The Department of Education must release a discussion paper to address the transition of students with higher level of needs from the public school system to the community for either work or further training.**

- ***Department of Education***

Response from the Department of Education:

Response from the Anglophone Sector:

The Department of Education has released a document named Resource for the Transition of Exceptional Students from School to Work or Post-secondary Education and Adult Life. This document is available on the Department of Education's web page. Over a thousand copies of the document have been made available to the school system.

The development of this document included consultation with several stakeholder groups, including NBACL. The release of this document to Resource teachers and guidance counsellors has proven to be extremely beneficial. Districts have been provided in-service on the use of the document, and it is now in its second printing. The document will continue to set the developmental transitional guidelines, procedures, and strategies for students with exceptionalities for the next several years. Recommendation completed.

Response from the Francophone Sector:

The Instructional Services Branch plans to publish a document dealing with the transition of exceptional students to the labour market or post-secondary education and adult life.

65. **The Province of New Brunswick must enhance their community consultation and policy development under the Federal/Provincial Agreement on employment known as E.A.P.D. (Employment Assistance Program for Persons with Disabilities). The accountability process must ensure resources are protected to serve clients with more difficult needs due to the nature or extent of disability involved. Policies on supports after the job placement is made are also not adequate at present.**

- ***Department of Family and Community Services***

Response from the Department of Family and Community Services:
The Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities has replaced the Employment Assistance Program for Persons with Disabilities. The Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities expires March 31, 2006.
As of March 17, 2006 the federal government has made no commitment to renew or extend the agreement.
We continue to participate in the FPT forum to advance work on the three building blocks of *In Unison*, income, disability supports and employment.
The report (*Looking Forward – Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities)* outlining the programming cost shared under the agreement for 2004-05 was released December 3, 2004 and can be found on the Family and Community Services website.

66. **All government funded employment related programs must be required to report the consolidated number of outcomes each year that assisted a person with a disability that was considered serious enough to be a factor in their employment options. They must also distinguish between short term and long term placement.**

- ***Department of Post-Secondary Education and Training***

Response from the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Training:
The Department is committed to exploring new methods of capturing the statistical data related to short term and long term placement.

67. **The programs working to improve literacy levels in New Brunswick must develop a strategy to improve overall access and use of their services by persons with various types of disabilities.**

- ***Department of Education***

Response from the Department of Education (Francophone Sector):
Elementary teachers, literacy mentors, and resource teachers have received and will continue to receive training to improve their reading and writing intervention. This training is based on the reading process and gives regular and specialized teachers the tools for prevention, detection, and intervention with all students.

68. **The Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission must prepare and release a status report on current levels of barrier-free access to post-secondary facilities by students with disabilities.**

- ***Department of Education***
- ***Department of Post-Secondary Education and Training***

Response from the Department of Education:

The MPHEC (Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission) represents the university sector; and since post-secondary facilities include community colleges, private institutions as well as universities the responsibility for preparing a status report should be a shared responsibility between the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons, the MPHEC, the departments of Education and of Training and Employment Development.

It is recommended that the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons work in collaboration with the MPHEC, Education and Post-Secondary Education and Training to identify a source of funding to investigate this situation and to conduct the review.

Some of the assessments have been undertaken and need to be updated for both community colleges and universities. Private facilities would be more problematic and would be a lower priority.

69. **Post-secondary institutions must indicate how they plan to increase the rate of participation by students with disabilities in their training programs by making them more inclusive.**

- ***Department of Education***
- ***Department of Post-Secondary Education and Training***

Response from the Department of Education:

Contact has been made between the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Training and the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons in order to advance this recommendation.

Furthermore, the Report of the Working Group on Accessibility to Post-Secondary Education stated in Recommendation 12:

"Give the Department of Education the responsibility to work with the Premier's Council on the Status of the Disabled Person to propose measures to improve the access to post-secondary education of people with disabilities." Government's response was that "The government agrees that the participation rates for persons with disabilities needs to be increased and the Premier's Council on the Status of the Disabled Persons will work more closely with the Department of Education, TED and Post-secondary institutions to develop strategies to address these needs." NBCC has initiated an enhanced provincial coordinated approach for students with disabilities. This approach will have as its goal, to increase participation of students with disabilities. It will include the development of policies, procedures, guidelines, professional development, and better information on available resources from admission to employment placement.

70. **The Department of Training and Employment Development will continue to support the activities of the Program Advisory Committee on Training Services for Persons with Disabilities. The goal is to increase the number of students with disabilities who are able to access and complete training programs at the community colleges.**

- ***Department of Post-Secondary Education and Training***

Response from the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Training:
The Department will continue to be active in addressing these issues through the New Brunswick Disability Executives' Network (NBDEN).

71. **The government must ensure that in situations where disability requires that students take longer to complete their programs of post-secondary training and education than students without disabilities that funding for personal supports, classroom and other educational supports and generic supports are available to the students with disabilities for as long as they are in the program.**

- ***Department of Post-Secondary Education and Training***
- ***Department of Family and Community Services***
- ***Department of Education***

Response from the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Training:
The TESS Program has been updated to provide support services to clients who need extra time to complete their program. The New Brunswick Community College (NBCC) has also committed to accommodating students who need extra time and have implemented a specific policy on this matter.

72. **Students who are deaf must have access to quality sign language services at all levels of education.**

- ***Department of Education***
- ***Department of Post-Secondary Education and Training***

Response from the Department of Education:
Response from Anglophone Sector:
Students who are deaf or hard of hearing currently have signing services provided by Educational Interpreter Assistants under the aegis of APSEA. All Educational Interpreters must be certified, thus ensuring a level of competency in their field of work.

Response from the Francophone Sector:
The school districts already offer sign language services to students who require this communication method at all grade levels.

Response from the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Training:
Refer to response to recommendation #69. As well the development of on-line courses, wnich is currently taking place in all our universities, will improve access for students with disabilities to all levels of education.

73. **New Brunswick must develop a Bilingual and Bicultural training program for deaf persons at the community college level to prepare deaf students for both the hearing world and the deaf community.**

- ***Department of Post-Secondary Education and Training***

Response from the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Training:
Community Deaf Literacy Program. The Department has introduced two Community Deaf Literacy Pilot Projects, one in Saint John (English) and one in Bathurst (French). The projects are being offered for a one-year period to verify the demand for such a service and to gain experience in the delivery of literacy training for the deaf. The project is currently ongoing.

4.	**INCOME**
a)	**Poverty**
b)	**Detaching Eligibility for Disability Support From Income Programs**
c)	**Transition Policies**

74. The comfort and clothing allowance provided to individuals in residential facilities must be increased and then reviewed on an annual basis. This increase must not come out of the funding paid to the service providers. Additional accountability measures are required to ensure these funds are actually received by the residents.

- ***Department of Family and Community Services***

Response from the Department of Family and Community Services:
The Comfort and Clothing Allowance for residents in special care homes, community residences and nursing homes will be increase by more than 20% over the 3 years. The first increase took place January 1st 2005 and the last increase will take place on April 1st, 2007. The Department of will provide the same percentage increase in the comfort and clothing allowance provided to long term care residents of the Restigouche and Centracare facilities.

75. The mileage rate allowed for medical and/or rehabilitation treatment travel by clients must be reviewed and brought in line with the reality of gasoline and travel costs and expenses for an attendant when needed.

- ***Department of Family and Community Services***

Response from the Department of Family and Community Services:
Effective November 01, 2005 the private vehicle rate increased from $0.11 to $0.20 cents per kilometer and the taxi rate increased from $0.34 to $0.38 cents per kilometer.

76. The eligibility criteria for the new financial supplement for persons certified as being disabled must be reviewed annually to ensure equitable access to this benefit.

- ***Department of Family and Community Services***

Response from the Department of Family and Community Services:
Over 4,900 individuals benefited from the $1000.00 disability supplement that was paid in October 2005. Government continues to be committed to the annual disability supplement.

77. **The Government of New Brunswick needs to develop a clear written policy of providing ongoing transitional supports to enable persons with chronic disabilities to seek full or part-time employment without losing support benefits that relate directly to their disability (i.e. health card, attendant care, etc.).**

- ***Department of Family and Community Services***

Response from the Department of Family and Community Services:
In September 2005 FCS announced an automatic extension of up to 12 months to existing health card coverage for persons exiting from social assistance to long term full-time employment or training. FCS is currently reviewing the possibility of furthering the length of this extension both internally and as part of the "Employ – *Ability" Action Group work.*

78. **The Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons, in conjunction with the Government of New Brunswick and other stakeholders, must discuss options to address the topic of poverty for citizens with disabilities and request ideas from interested stakeholders on creative options to address this reality.**

- ***Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons***

Response from the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons:
The provincial government has introduced a new Disability Supplement for persons certified as being disabled who also receive social assistance benefits. Education and training strategies are trying to increase the number of persons with disabilities who will be successful in finding employment. Submissions have been made to the federal government on improving tax benefits for persons with disabilities.
We will need to continue efforts to address the level of poverty faced by many persons with disabilities in New Brunswick living on a small fixed income while costs of living continue to rise.

5.	**HEALTH AND WELLNESS/PREVENTION**
a)	**Rehabilitation Services**
b)	**Access to Specialized Health Care Services**
c)	**Active Living/Recreation**
d)	**Prevention Strategy**

79. **The Government of New Brunswick has long recognized the importance of health promotion and prevention initiatives. We would like to see a summary that outlines specifically what the Government of New Brunswick is doing and would like to do over the next year to reduce the number of birth defects, illnesses and injuries that lead to chronic disability and improve the health and wellness of mothers-to-be.**

- ***Department of Health***

Response from the Department of Health:

Early Childhood Initiatives:

The goal of ECI is to enhance the development of priority children prior to school entry to contribute to their future scholastic achievement. Children from the prenatal stage to 5 years of age are defined as a priority if their development is at risk due to physical, intellectual or environmental factors.

Prenatally, Public Health (PH) nurses and nutritionists promote and support healthy choices known to have a positive impact on the developing baby, and intervene to help expectant mothers to meet their needs.

Postnatally, PH nurses work with parents to assist them in their parenting role and to provide services that foster optimum development of infants and young children.

Screening is offered to all preschool children at age 3 ½ years to identify possible developmental delays or concerns, to promote healthy eating, to provide information on positive parenting.

Services to Early Childhood Group:

- The New Brunswick Universal Newborn and Infant Hearing Screening Program began provincial implementation in May 2002. The Program mandate is to screen every infant born in New Brunswick for a hearing loss with a rapid and non-invasive hearing screening tool. Infants who do not pass the screening are referred to an Audiologist for further investigation.

  The program includes three components: universal screening, assessment, and intervention. Since the program was announced there

have been at least four babies identified with some form of hearing loss. The DHW has allocated additional funding in 2003-2004 towards the purchase of equipment which will ensure the success of advanced screenings and further aid the Audiologists in identifying babies with hearing loss as soon as possible after birth.

- The DH allocated further funding in 2005-2006 for rehabilitation assistants for each region to support the ongoing provision of this program.

Healthy Learners:

- The Healthy Learners in School Program was introduced to all school districts in September 2000. The goal of the program is to implement actions that encourage development of healthy behaviours and supportive environments (primary prevention and health promotion) working with parents, educators, students and community groups. The program provides a Public Health Nurse in each district to act as a catalyst to promote health and wellness. Part of the program involves supporting provincial development and district delivery of health curriculum.
- 18 Public Health Nurses were appointed (one per district) to focus on the health promotion/primary prevention priorities for students in K-grade 5. NOTE – as a result of a recent decrease in number of districts from 18 to 14, 4 surplus FTEs were able to be reallocated to expansion to grades 6-8 in 4 districts.
- 10 PHNs (allocated on a population basis) for 20 high schools in school districts 1, 11, 17, 18. Program expansion to other high schools will occur as resources permit.

BREASTFEEDING PROMOTION

Implementation of a comprehensive strategy for protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding based on a social marketing model. (05-02)

The Department of Health has launched through its Wellness Strategy, the Baby-Friendly™ Initiative which is a WHO/ UNICEF global strategy to promote, support and protect breastfeeding.

- A BFI Coordinator has been hired to support the implementation of the initiative.
- Promotional materials for the general public and educational activities for health care staff are planned.

Other:

- The Department of Health has committed to extending Corporate Sponsorship for Disability Awareness Week through 2003.

- The Department supports the premise that the best approach to preventing disease is through the promotion of healthy lifestyles.
- Department of Health is working with Atlantic Health Ministries and Health Canada to identify regional initiatives to promote the well-being of Atlantic Canadians.

Immunization:

As announced in the Provincial Health Plan in June 2004, the Department has added four new vaccines to the NB immunization coverage for young New Brunswickers, an investment of $1.7 million in 2004-2005 and an additional $1.85 million in 2005-2006. More than 40,000 children and adolescents will benefit this year from vaccines against chickenpox, meningitis, whooping cough and pneumonia. Vaccines for adolescents will be given by Public Health nurses in schools in fall 2004. A combined vaccine providing protection against tetanus, diphtheria and whooping cough will be available for students in grades 9, 10 and 11. In addition, students in grade 9 will also be eligible to receive immunization against meningococcal disease.

Immunization is one of the most powerful and cost-effective tools of modern medicine. The goal of the New Brunswick immunization program is, through the provision of safe and effective vaccines, to protect the population against vaccine-preventable diseases. Since September 2004, four new vaccines have been added to the NB Routine Childhood Immunization schedule, providing protection to children and adolescents against chicken pox, invasive meningococcal disease, invasive pneumococcal disease and whooping cough. This represents an investment of $3.864 million in 2005-2006.

Smoke Free Places Act:

Effective October 1, 2004, smoking is no longer permitted on NB school grounds, in retail stores, community halls, conference centres, sports arenas, educational buildings, bingos, bars, restaurants and all indoor workplaces. Smoke-free legislation is expected to reduce exposure to second-hand smoke by 80 percent, cut cigarette consumption by at least 20 percent, and save the province an estimated $132 million a year in health care costs and productivity costs.

80. **The Department of Health and Wellness must release a public discussion paper on their views and responses to the issue of severe chemical and environmental sensitivities/allergies.**

- ***Department of Health***

Response from the Department of Health:
The Department's immediate priorities are the implementation of the Provincial Health Plan. The Department is open to looking into the issues at some future point.

81. The Government of New Brunswick must continue to promote a policy of scent free environments in all government offices and facilities.

- ***Office of Human Resources***

Response from the Office of Human Resources:
Government has promoted scent free environments for a number of years and continues the awareness program on an on-going basis. This initiative is now an on-going government activity and can be removed from the action plan list of things to do.

Response from Service New Brunswick:
SNB complies with the scent free environment policy

82. The Province of New Brunswick must develop in collaboration with persons with disabilities and organizations that speak for them, prevention and safeguard strategies to protect persons with disabilities against violence and abuse.

- ***Department of Family and Community Services***
- ***Department of Public Safety***
- ***Department of Justice and Consumer Affairs***
- ***Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons***

Response from the Department of Family and Community Services:
The Adult Victims of Abuse Protocols have been updated and released to the regions. A train the trainer session was held on April 6&7, 2006 in Fredericton. The intent is that the participants of this training, upon their return to the regions, will deliver this training to Family and Community Services staff as well as staff from our partners. The regional Protocol Coordinators will assist in the organization and implementation of the regional Adult Victims of Abuse training.

Response from the Department of Public Safety:
A guide designed to help persons with intellectual disabilities understand the court system has been produced by Public Legal Education and Information Service of New Brunswick in collaboration the Department of Public Safety, and the New Brunswick Association for Community Living. Many other stakeholders contributed to the development of the materials. The guide,

entitled *Picture This* explains the criminal-law system from the time a victim comes into contact with the police, through to completion of the court process. It is written in clear wording and has simple illustrations that make it easy to understand. The guide is available in both official languages and has been distributed to all Department of Public Safety Victim Services offices, New Brunswick Community Living Association as well at police, libraries, guidance counsellors and transition houses throughout the province.

83. The government of New Brunswick in conjunction with the Recreation and Parks Association of New Brunswick Directorate for Inclusive Recreation, assist the existing disability sport and recreation sector in building/strengthening partnerships with community facilities and provincial organizations to help "open doors" and educate regarding barriers to participation.

- ***Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport***

Response from the Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport:
Over the past two years we have increased our level of involvement with the Directorate for Inclusive Recreation. A consultant, from our Branch, has been working with this organization and has assisted the development of a provincial plan for New Brunswick, the development and production of a video on the promotion and participation of persons with a disability in sport and recreation as well as providing financial assistance. We will continue to work closely with this organization in the promotion of full participation of persons with a disability in the sectors of sport and recreation.
In addition to our work with the Directorate, we continue to support our partners to provide quality sport, recreation and active living opportunities for New Brunswickers and their communities. Our major role is to work with, empower and enable partners in the delivery system to provide quality programs and services to New Brunswickers and their communities.
Our branch provides consultative and annual financial assistance to many provincial and regional organizations including:
NB Division of the Canadian Deafblind & Rubella Association
NB Division of the Canadian Council for the Blind
NB Association for Community Living
NB Deaf Sport Association
NB Special Olympics
Camp Rotary
Camp Canak
Therapeutic Riding Association

NB Division of the Canadian Association for Disabled Ski
NB Recreation and Sport Association for the Visually Impaired
Directorate for Inclusive Recreation
Under a special initiative, a staff member of the branch continues his involvement with the committee overseeing a special project on "Community Inclusion" spearheaded by the Association for Community Living.
Changes to our funding process will now allow us to gain an accurate assessment of the strength of our provincial organization's contribution towards the pursuit of excellence as well as participation, leadership and community. Within this process/model, we will also be able to assess their level of involvement and activity as it relates to Barrier Breaking initiatives.

84. The Department of Health and Wellness must prepare an updated summary of their strategic plan for the future of rehabilitation services in New Brunswick.

- ***Department of Health***

Response from the Department of Health:
The Department of Health, with the assistance of Health Canada's Health Transition Fund (HTF), conducted an evaluation of the implementation and impact of selected strategies of the Rehabilitation Services Plan. This comprehensive report was officially released in March 2001. Evaluation results served as a foundation for planning of rehabilitation services in New Brunswick.
The Rehabilitation Services Advisory Committee (RSAC), a ministerial advisory committee, meets on a regular basis to discuss issues of concern with respect to monitoring the Province's Rehabilitation Services Plan, departmental/government policy on rehabilitation issues, education of rehabilitation professionals, trends in rehabilitation services, and gaps in programs/services to rehabilitation clients.
The Mental Health Advisory Committee meets regularly as a proactive initiative for discussing concerns/issues and providing recommendations to the Minister of Health and Wellness on a broad spectrum of mental health issues.
The NB Extra-Mural program has completed the process for developing a Preferred Practice document for each discipline providing service within the program. Preferred practice documents for occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech language pathology, nursing, dieticians, social work and respiratory therapy are finalized. Documents are currently under review for updating to ensure they remain relevant to practice and client centred service delivery.

85. The Department of Health and Wellness must complete the plans and provide funding to build the new tertiary rehabilitation centre to replace the Stan Cassidy Centre for Rehabilitation.

- ***Department of Health***

Response from the Department of Health:
The Stan Cassidy Centre for Rehabilitation has been recognized and acknowledged. Capital funds were made available in each of the last 5 years for the planning and design phase and construct the structure for the integration of the SCCR to the DECH site in Fredericton. Construction phase began in August 2003 and patients from the SCCR are expected to be moved into the new facility in late May 2006.

86. The Province of New Brunswick must continue to support a provincial driver assessment and education service for persons with disabilities to return to driving following becoming disabled, or for new drivers who are likely to require special adaptations to drive safely and comfortably despite their disability.

- ***Department of Transportation***
- ***Department of Health***
- ***Department of Public Safety***

Response from the Department of Transportation:
The Adaptive Driving Program continues to be available through the Stan Cassidy Centre for Rehabilitation. NBDOT met with officials of the program in 2005 to discuss the issue. The matter of long term funding for the program continues to be unresolved.

Response from the Department of Public Safety:
DPS should be deleted from this item as:
(a) the driver examiners do not assist in this testing nor do they visit the sites.
(b) DPS does not set any requirements for these facilities and they are not treated as a driver training school.
The only role the Motor Vehicle Branch played in the past and continues to play is that driver testing is completed by SNB Driver Examiner's after a report by the Occupational Therapist has been filed with DPS.

87. **Design and fund a recruitment strategy to increase the overall number of rehabilitation professionals working in New Brunswick.**

- ***Department of Health***

Response from the Department of Health:

The Department of Health established a permanent position and appointed a resource to the position of Health Professional Resource Advisor, part of whose role and responsibilities will be to address recruitment and retention issues for all allied health professionals.

A provincial Health Human Resources Recruiters' Network was established to build on the work completed by RSAC. As such, the regional recruiters of all eight Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) meet four times a year to discuss provincial and regional recruitment and retention challenges and/or opportunities. Rehabilitation professionals are part of the health occupations discussed. Key activities of this network include the Annual NB Career Days. These visits to the universities with which NB has enrolment agreements in rehab and other health occupations have occurred each fall since 2003. In 2005-2006, a total of 324 students attended this event; 97 (30%) of these students were enrolled in rehabilitation programs.

As well, since the 1970s, the NB Clinical Education Program for Audiology, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Speech Language Pathology has been promoting and facilitating the return of students to NB to complete their clinical placements throughout their studies. For academic year 2004-2005, close to 250 students completed their placements in NB health care settings.

A total of $0.5 million in new funding was announced during the 2005-2006 Main Speech Estimates for the implementation of a new Allied Health Resource Strategy. In keeping with recommendations from the provincial rehabilitation associations, the new Allied Health Resource Strategy includes a health bursary program that targets hard to recruit for health occupations. Outcomes for the 2005-2006 bursary program indicate that 34 (14 rehab and 20 other allied health) students have signed a return for service agreement of two years with the Province. The Bursary Program for 2006-2007 should resume by the end of April 2006.

88. **Increase the level of structured physical education in the public school system at all grade levels with an emphasis on physical activity and active living skills that can be carried on outside of the school setting when the student is no longer at school. This is especially important for students with disabilities to be included and to teach other students how to think inclusively.**

- ***Department of Education***

Response from the Department of Education:

Response from the Anglophone Sector:

The intent and the reality of the physical education curriculum is that it seeks to serve all students. Recent implementation initiatives regarding a new elementary level curriculum have brought the issue of inclusion into focus once more. The Physical Education Mentors and other Department staff have worked to ensure that all students have the opportunity to participate fully. The "Moving To Inclusion" series produced by Health Canada and the Active Living Alliance for Canadians with Disabilities is a key resource which focuses on physical education activities appropriate to students with disabilities.

Response from the Francophone Sector:

The K-12 physical education program recommends active living with emphasis on active living skills. It is centered on the needs of all learners. Also, the nature, type, frequency, and intensity of physical activities presented in the physical education program take the skills and needs of each student into account. The program is offered by teachers specializing in the field of physical education.

89. Ensure equitable and timely access to specialized health care services required by persons with disabilities.

- ***Department of Health***

Response from the Department of Health:

Deriving its mandate from the Provincial Health Plan, the Primary Health Care Collaborative Committee has been formed to focus on a range of primary care issues – including addressing linkages between different aspects of primary health care, and considering a chronic care model for New Brunswick.

As part of the implementation of the Provincial Health Plan (2004-2008) a Patient Safety and Clinical Collaboration Committee has been created with a mandate to ensure New Brunswickers have access to safe, quality clinical programs in a timely manner. Representatives from all RHAs and stakeholders are focusing on three areas: clinical programs; surgical access management; and best practices for patient safety.

6.	**RESEARCH**
a)	**Demographics/Outcome Measures**
b)	**Social Policy - Best Practices**
c)	**Evidence Based Decision Making**

90. Greater emphasis be given to creating more consistent funding mechanisms and funding levels for needed social and economic research related to disability issues. Perhaps universities, community colleges, professional associations, businesses, community groups and government should pool their resources to design and fund needed research.

- ***Department of Education***
- ***Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission***
- ***Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons***
- ***Department of Health (N.B. Medical Research Fund)***
- ***Department of Post-Secondary Education and Training***

Response from the Department of Education:
There is currently very limited funding available for research of all forms and it is recommended that new sources of funding be identified for this type of research - for example funding available from disability associations, charitable organizations, private foundations that often have research funding available (for example War Amputees, etc.)
It is also recommended that the Council investigate research initiatives that presently exist, for example centres of excellence in the world that are known for their research related to disabilities, and to share the results of this review.

Response from the Department of Health:
The Medical Research Fund (MRFNB) is the government of New Brunswick's primary mechanism for supporting health-related research in New Brunswick. Since its inception in 1989, the MRFNB has provided funding for a full spectrum of health research including: biomedical science, clinical care, health services, population health and community-based participatory action research. The Wordel fund for kidney related research is also administered as part of the MRFNB. Options for incorporating the MRFNB into a more comprehensive strategy for building health research capacity in New Brunswick are currently being explored.

91. The Government of New Brunswick and the Government of Canada need to work together with the other stakeholders to generate current and longitudinal data collection on statistics and outcome measures related to citizens with disabilities.

- ***Department of Finance***
- ***Department of Post-Secondary Education and Training***
- ***Department of Family and Community Services***
- ***Department of Education***

Response from the Department of Finance:

The Department of Finance through the New Brunswick Statistical Focal Point continues to support the need for current information on persons with disabilities via consultations and F-P-T Committee meetings with Statistics Canada.

Statistics Canada (**www.statcan.ca**) has secured funding to carry out the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) in 2006. The following provides a brief overview of the survey:

- Content will be similar to PALS 2001
- Sample size for Canada is 44,713 including residents of the Territories; 4,290 for New Brunswick
- Data collection is scheduled for October to December 2006 (estimated cost is over $3 million)
- Data release is scheduled for Fall 2007

Other Statistics Canada surveys that complement PALS include: Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (annual) and Canadian Community Health Survey (biennial).

Other sources of information include:

- The Office of Disability Issues within Social Development Canada - see **www.sdc.gc.ca** - Publications, then Persons with Disabilities.
- The Canadian Council of Social Development provides the Disability Research Information Page – see **www.ccsd.ca/drip**

VII ACCOUNTABILITY/OUTCOME MEASURES

Every partner involved in the design and delivery of supports to citizens with disabilities should have a process to evaluate whether they are making progress. These ideas are only the first steps to begin to make our system more accountable to citizens with disabilities. More effort is needed to design a fair and reasonable way to achieve actual inclusion for all citizens.

1) We would request that all government departments and agencies include in their annual reports a specific section describing what level of services they have provided to persons with disabilities in the past year. They should also measure client satisfaction levels and report on any outcome measures.

2) The Interdepartmental Committee on the Action Plan for Persons with a Disability in New Brunswick will present an annual Status Report on the Action Plan.

3) We would attempt to see that data is collected and reported on the following systemic outcome measures:

- comparison of **workforce participation** rates of persons with and without disabilities (employment rates, unemployment rates, % in full time/part time, % in self-employment, etc.);
- comparison of **education levels** of persons with and without disabilities;
- % children/families requiring **special education support** that are satisfied with current arrangements;
- level of participation in **public policy processes**;
- % satisfied with opportunities to participate in community-based **recreation, arts, culture** and **active living**;
- % persons requiring **special or accessible transportation** that are satisfied with the service in their community;
- % persons with disabilities requiring **suitable, affordable and accessible housing** that are able to obtain it;

- % persons requiring **financial support** that are satisfied that they are able to live in dignity;

- % persons satisfied with **health care support** they have access to and/ or receive;

- % persons requiring **help with housework and household chores** that are satisfied with the help they are receiving;

- % persons with disabilities that require **home or attendant care** that are satisfied with the support they receive;

- % persons requiring **technical aids, devices or special equipment** that feel they have been able to access appropriate disability supports.

4) We would refer you to the following Personal Outcome Measures and the Outcomes for Families and Children :

A) PERSONAL OUTCOME MEASURES

	YES	NO
IDENTITY		
People choose personal goals.	____	____
People choose where and with whom they live.	____	____
People choose where they work.	____	____
People have intimate relationships.	____	____
People are satisfied with services.	____	____
People are satisfied with personal life situations.	____	____
AUTONOMY		
People choose their daily routine.	____	____
People have time, space and opportunity for privacy.	____	____
People decide when to share personal information.	____	____
People use their environments.	____	____
AFFILIATION		
People live in integrated environments.	____	____
People participate in the life of the community.	____	____
People interact with other members of the community.	____	____
People perform different social roles.	____	____
People have friends.	____	____
People are respected.	____	____
ATTAINMENT		
People choose services.	____	____
People realize personal goals.	____	____
SAFEGUARDS		
People are connected to natural support networks.	____	____
People are safe.	____	____
RIGHTS		
People exercise rights.	____	____
People are treated fairly.	____	____
HEALTH AND WELLNESS		
People have the best possible health.	____	____
People are free from abuse and neglect.	____	____
People experience continuity and security.	____	____

(Adapted from the Council on Quality and Leadership in Supports for People with Disabilities.)

B) OUTCOMES FOR FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

	YES	NO
CHOICE		
- Families are informed.	____	____
- Families choose services and supports.	____	____
GOALS		
- Families choose their goals.	____	____
- Families choose child development goals.	____	____
- Families attain their goals.	____	____
- Children attain developmental milestones.	____	____
RIGHTS		
- Families exercise their rights.	____	____
- Children are free from abuse and neglect.	____	____
RESPECT		
- Families are respected.	____	____
- Families decide when to share personal information.	____	____
HEALTH AND SAFETY		
- Children have the best possible health.	____	____
- Children are safe.	____	____
RELATIONSHIPS		
- Families remain together.	____	____
- Children spend time in inclusive environments.	____	____
- Children develop relationships.	____	____
- Families remain connected to natural supports.	____	____
- Families are a part of their communities.	____	____
SECURITY		
- Families have economic resources.	____	____
- Families experience continuity and security.	____	____
SATISFACTION		
- Families are satisfied with their services.	____	____
- Families are satisfied with their life situations.	____	____

(Adapted from the Council on Quality and Leadership in Supports for People with Disabilities.)

VIII NEXT STEPS IN THE PROCESS

PLEASE SEE EDITOR'S COMMENTS AT FRONT OF THIS DOCUMENT.

This document has been developed with the input from many sources such as the participants at the provincial conference on disability issues held in late May of 2000 and many other meetings involving contacts with the disability community.

The Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons prepared working drafts to be shared with various partners for further input and revisions before this report was to be submitted to government.

We have held a meeting of the Interdepartmental Committee on the Action Plan to confirm the lead Departments responsible for each recommendation. The Department representatives were to share this material with their superiors before we prepared the final draft of this document. We will be assigning a timetable and budget estimates to each recommendation as well in the next phase of this project.

This report was ready to present to Cabinet Committee by mid-January, 2001 and then released publicly shortly after that.

The Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons took responsibility to follow up with each Department individually and with the government collectively to hold everyone accountable for action on this material.

We report periodically to the public and review and update the plan as required. We expect that the annual Disability Awareness Week would provide an opportunity to do this.

We will also be asking for a public commitment to creating the new comprehensive integrated policy framework for citizens with disabilities in New Brunswick.

Questions or suggestions on the follow-up next steps can be made to the office of the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons.

IX CONCLUSION

Canada is a great country and New Brunswick is a province that offers many opportunities for the people who live here. We have listened to many individuals and groups who feel that we can do more to ensure that citizens with disabilities of any type will be able to share the benefits of full citizenship in a fair way.

The message we have received is that persons with disabilities and groups involved in disability issues and services want to strengthen their on-going partnership with government decision makers to lead to better outcomes for citizens with disabilities in New Brunswick.

They expect the government of New Brunswick to provide sustained leadership and on-going coordinated efforts to achieve the objectives outlined in this report. We believe that meaningful partnerships from all sectors will be necessary to implement these goals. It will be important to develop effective and objective outcome indicators to measure the rate of success in delivering a better quality of life to all citizens with any type of disability who have not yet reached full inclusion in their community.

The specific recommendations in this report are to help guide the provincial government to take specific actions that citizens with disabilities feel are necessary. The list should not be considered a final or exclusive expression of government responsibilities but would go a long way to demonstrate their commitment to actions under their mandate.

The most important objective is for the Government of New Brunswick to accept the need to establish a process in partnership with persons with disabilities and community agencies involved with disability issues to create a comprehensive integrated policy framework for citizens with disabilities.

Much energy and time has been spent to generate awareness and support for the issues of persons with disabilities. Some positive results have certainly been made and we are grateful for that progress.

However, the members of the disability community wish to see expressions of support in principle translated into a sustained priority for action and positive outcomes.

The Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons is calling on the Government of New Brunswick; on people with disabilities of all types; on disability advocates; on service providers; and on the public at large to pledge themselves to the next Decade For Positive Outcomes for all persons with disabilities in our province.

Together, we can make it happen!

APPENDIX A DEFINITIONS OF TERMINOLOGY

In 1980, the World Health Organization issued the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities, and Handicaps (ICIDH) in accordance with Resolution (WHA29.35) of the World Health Assembly. ICIDH terminology refers to three concepts : impairments, disabilities and handicaps defined as follows :

Impairment - "any loss or abnormality of a psychological, or anatomical structure or function". Impairments are disturbances at the level of the organ.

Disability - "any restriction or inability (resulting from an impairment) to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being." This describes a functional limitation or activity restriction caused by an impairment. Disabilities are descriptions of disturbances in function at the level of the person.

Handicap - "any disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from an impairment or a disability, that limits or prevents the fulfillment of a role that is normal for that individual." The classification of handicap is a classification of circumstances that place individuals "at a disadvantage relative to their peers when viewed from the norms of society." The classification of handicap deals with the relationship that evolves between society, culture and people who have impairments or disabilities, as reflected in people's life roles.

(International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps : World Health Organization)

Disability supports are :

- any good
- or any service

which assists a person in overcoming barriers to carrying out activities of daily living, or to achieve social (includes political and cultural activities) and economic participation.

A good or service becomes "disability related" when it is used to assist a person or persons in overcoming barriers associated with a disabling condition.

(Roeher Institute)

Equality - the values inherent in the concept of equality include self-determination, autonomy, dignity, respect, integration, participation and independent living.

(In Unison, 1998)

Barrier-free - This phrase is not intended to be limited to a description of physical accessibility to a building. We are talking about creating open and supportive environments where all citizens are welcome and have the supports and features necessary to allow them to be fully included as participants in all public programs, services and facilities.

Consumer - We are referring here to either a person with a disability or to the parent, guardian or advocate responsible for making decisions about a person's personal care and support services if that person is not legally capable or competent to do so. This is not to imply that a person with a disability is only a consumer. Persons with disabilities should be involved in choices that will affect the quality of life they will be able to enjoy.

APPENDIX B STATISTICS ON PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Statistics Canada did their last detailed collection of national statistics on persons with disabilities in the 2001 post censal survey known as the *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey*.

We are including some information generated from that data even though it is now quite old material. Not all persons with disabilities were included in the sample methodology used in the survey. We will look forward to more comprehensive and current data being available to get a more accurate picture about citizens with permanent disabilities.

Using the 2001 definitions based on functional limitations, we see the following breakdown of information.

Disability Rate in Canada = 12.4% of the general population have a disability.

Disability Rate in New Brunswick = 14.4% of the general population have a disability. This is the third highest rate per capita in Canada.

The census survey in 2001 showed that persons with disabilities at that time in New Brunswick had generally lower than average household incomes and higher than average unemployment and under employment rates compared to the general population.

It is also clear that the rate and severity of disability increases with age. This is especially important considering the demographics of the general population of New Brunswick showing a higher percentage of older adults.

For more information on statistics about persons with disabilities please go to the website of the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons at www.gnb.ca/0048.

APPENDIX C INDEX OF RECOMMENDATIONS LISTED BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT

DEPARTMENT	Lead Department		Supporting Department	
	Rec. #	Page	Rec. #	Page
Education	22	26	11	20
	29	30	49	38
	47	38	50	41
	51	41	60	46
	52	42	61	46
	53	42	71	51
	54	43	91	65
	55	43		
	56	44		
	57	45		
	58	45		
	59	45		
	63	47		
	64	48		
	67	49		
	68	49		
	69	50		
	72	51		
	88	62		
	90	64		
Executive Council Office			1	15
			12	20
			19	24
			24	27
			49	38

DEPARTMENT	Lead Department		Supporting Department	
	Rec. #	Page	Rec. #	Page
Family and Community Services	1	15	9	19
	4	17	11	20
	6	17	12	20
	8	18	16	23
	13	21	24	27
	14	22	31	31
	17	24	60	46
	18	24	61	46
	34	32	71	51
	35	33	91	65
	36	33		
	37	33		
	38	34		
	39	34		
	40	35		
	49	38		
	65	48		
	74	53		
	75	53		
	76	53		
	77	54		
	82	58		
Finance	91	65	11	20
			16	23
Health	9	19	12	20
	79	55	49	38
	80	57	86	61
	84	60		
	85	61		
	87	62		
	89	63		
(Medical Research Fund of NB)			90	64

DEPARTMENT	Lead Department		Supporting Department	
	Rec. #	Page	Rec. #	Page
Interdepartmental Committee on the Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick	7	18		
Intergovernmental Affairs			16	23
Justice and Consumer Affairs			13 82	21 58
Local Government	27 28 31 48	29 29 31 38	42	35
Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission			90	64
Minister Responsible for the Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat	12	20		
Office of the Premier	10	19		
Office of Human Resources	62 81	47 58		
Post-Secondary Education and Training	11 50 60 61 66 70 71 73	20 41 46 46 49 51 51 52	12 68 69 72 90 91	20 49 50 51 64 65

DEPARTMENT	Lead Department		Supporting Department	
	Rec. #	Page	Rec. #	Page
Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons	2 5 15 16 19 20 23 24 78	16 17 22 23 24 25 27 27 54	1 7 10 27 28 36 48 49 62 82 90	15 18 19 29 29 33 38 38 47 58 64
Public Safety	25 42 44 45 46	28 35 36 37 37	43 82 86	36 58 61
Regional Development Corporation	33	32		
Supply & Services	21 26	25 28	25 27 28 29 34 48	28 29 29 30 32 38
Transportation	41 43 86	35 36 61	42 44 46	35 36 37
Tourism and Parks	3 30	16 31		
Wellness, Culture and Sport	32 83	31 59		